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Chief: Crime Plummets in Lawrence



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Lawrence Police Chief Roy Vasque appeared on the Paying Attention! Podcast last week to discuss the opioid crisis, homelessness and the plummeting crime rate in Lawrence.

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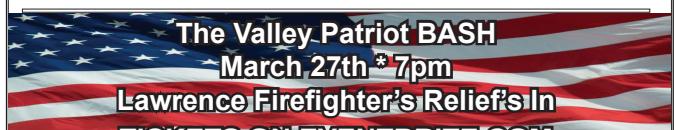
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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

Major Ronald Santagati, US Air Force: Korean and Vietnam Wars

John Cuddy

VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

Raised in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Ronald Santagati is now living in Salem, New Hampshire with his wife (and high school sweetheart) Joan, to whom he has been married to for nearly sixty-five years. During our Saturday morning meeting over coffee and Tripoli cookies in his kitchen, we started with a lively conversation over who had the best fish

and chips in Lawrence. Some members of his family believe it was a market known as the Five Star, near the current Hancock Housing Project in Lawrence, while I, and some of Ronald's other family members are backing Langford's Fish Market on South Union Street in Lawrence.

Both of us grew up in Lawrence, and both of us are now retired from the US Military. On a Saturday morning we also formed a bond reminiscing over seeing movies at the Warner Theater and bowl-

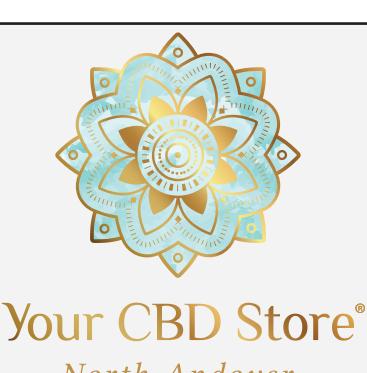
ing at the Lawrence Recreation Bowling Alley. Major Santagati attended St. Patrick's Grammar School, which was down the street from the family home and later graduated from Central Catholic High School with the Class of 1951. While at Central, Major Santagati played football, basketball, and baseball. He proudly showed me a team photo on the wall in his den, with him in his football uniform as a 150lb fullback and linebacker. He led his team as captain as the first unbeaten-united football team at Central. Later joking with me that today's high school football players are so big, that, if he played now, he would probably not be starting at 150lbs!

His first job as a youth, was delivering groceries for Gallant's Market, on Parker street, across from where he attended St. Patrick's Grammar School, (in his words) as the "only Italian kid in the school". Typical of the many bright, blue collar, young men and women, who, once given the opportunity to compete on the level playing field that is provided by the US Military, he excelled in the service. Earning a BA in History from South East Oklahoma University, a BS in Electrical Engineering from Oklahoma State University, and finally earning his MBA from USC, all while serving on active duty.

During his second year at Merrimack College, (the college his younger brother Richard Santagati would later lead as the school's President for more than a decade) he received his draft notice. Rather than waiting to be drafted by the US Army, he



joined the Air Force as an Aviation Cadet. He was selected for Officer Training by the Air Force, and as a newly minted Second Lieutenant became an Air Force navigator. Major Santagati served from September of 1953 to September of 1973, defending our nation during his military career, which began near the end of the Korean conflict, and ended during President Nixon's withdrawal of US Troops from Vietnam in 1973. While serving in Vietnam, Major Santagati was exposed to Agent Orange which left him and many others with severe disabilities. Major Santagati often jokes that he served in three wars – the Korean War, the Cold War "when it wasn't cold", and the Vietnam



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Methuen Councilors Should Know Their Place

After the last election, it's somewhat surprising to learn that some members of the Methuen City Council either do not understand their roles and responsibilities as elected officials, or purposely overstep their authority as councilors.

Under the city charter, city councilors represent the legislative branch of city government. They have no say over the day to day operations of the city. When they are not sitting at a full city council meeting, individual city councilors have no more power than any other citizen of Methuen. Nor should they.

Yet, councilors like Steve Saba and Jim McCarty think that their elected positions give them the right to barge into the mayor's office whenever they feel like it to make demands for information or services.

They also seem to have no problem randomly dropping in on the various city department head offices for their pet projects as if these city employees work for them.

They don't.

Because some city councilors have abused their authority by demanding that

their constituent issues or requests for information be addressed right away (even when they are not emergencies) it has hampered the day to day operations of city business, including the mayor's staff and department heads.

This is not acceptable, and Mayor Perry has put a stop to it with a new communications policy which requires city councilors to submit their information or constituent requests in writing, via email, to all city department heads as well as the mayor's office.

Good for him.

Perry's new policy memo states that councilors have been overstepping their authority saying: "While we recognize the need to address council inquiries, the practice of communications via constant interruptions and demands for immediate response on non-emergency matters outside the council agenda is interfering with the staff's ability to focus on the city's most pressing goals. The residents and the staff deserve a better process."

To be clear, no member of the city council – or the public - can show up at the mayor's office, the DPW office, the

police or fire chief's office, or any other department in the city and demand information or services be provided immediately by city workers.

In every other city and town, councilors - like all regular citizens - have to make an appointment to see a mayor or department head to request city services. They are not to be given any favors such as city workers expediting their requests simply because they are elected officials.

That style of old school favor-based politics is what the citizens of Methuen rejected in the last election when they voted for Neil Perry by a landslide 71%.

Methuen, city workers must be allowed to do their jobs without part time city councilors making demands, while refusing to go through the same request process as everyone else.

As a member of the public you have to submit a public records request to get information or documents from the executive branch of city government. Under the law, the city has ten days to fulfill that request. You don't have the right to just pop in and demand documents "immediately" like Steve Saba and Jim McCarty do. As

a member of the public, no city councilor should have the ability to get city services faster than any other citizen.

Furthermore, if the information or services that councilors are demanding are of such vital importance to the city council, they should put the item on the city council agenda, discuss it with their colleagues, and take a vote officially asking for the information.

Yet, for some reasons Methuen City Councilor Saba and McCarty think their elected positions give them free reign over the executive branch of city government.

They don't.

Mayor Neil Perry and his administration have a monumental task ahead of them trying to turn the city around after years of financial mismanagement. It's a tough enough task given the myriad of problems Methuen is faced with, without part time city councilors interfering with that important work in order to get political favors.

In fact, we would argue that it's this very type of political interference that caused Methuen's current problems in the first place. ♦

Eparatodos Entrepreneurship Committee, Shrinking the Gap Between Latino Businesses, the American Market

Tomas G. Michel

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

LAWRENCE - For the third time, the EParaTodos' Entrepreneurship committee, brought a high-profile Keynote Speaker to the city, empowering the local Business Owners & Entrepreneurs through a networking event which took place at Japú Restaurant: with the main goal to assist attendants to expand their social network.

The Keynote Speaker was the Cuban Nelson Reyneri, whom is currently serving as Liberty Power's Senior Vice President for sales and external affairs. In this role, he oversees the company's strategy for developing structured solutions to support corporations' energy and sustainability goals. This includes product development for supply and demand side energy strategies, internal and external business analytics and energy related thought leadership, including engagement with Chief Procurement Officers, Sourcing Professionals, Diversity and Inclusion Professionals as well as Public Service Commissions.

The event took place on Tuesday, January 28th, 2020 from 6:00 PM to 8:00PM. Free of cost, and open to the public.

Reyneri holds two master's degrees, one in Business Administration from



Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, and the other one in Public Administration from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Reyneri also has extensive senior leadership experience in the public sector. In 2016, he was nominated by President Barack Obama to serve on the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), a position requiring Senate confirmation. In the 2004 election cycle, Reyneri led the Democratic

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Merrimack Valley Hospice Achieves Three-Star Status in We Honor Veterans Program

Haverhill – Merrimack Valley Hospice, which provides compassionate physical, emotional and spiritual care for those with life-limiting illness, recently achieved the third of four partner levels available through We Honor Veterans, an innovative program developed by the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The distinction recognizes that Merrimack Valley Hospice, which supports patients and their families with hospice and palliative care services in a variety of settings, has improved care and access for veterans by developing and strengthening relationships with VA medical centers and other veteran organizations.

Merrimack Valley Hospice previously ensured it is equipped to address veterans' complex end-of-life needs by providing veteran-centric education for staff and volunteers and developing collaborative partnerships with community hospices, state hospice organizations and VA facilities. The fourth partner level to be achieved is measuring the impact of VA and community interventions.

"We are proud to 'earn our stars,'" said Eric Redard, volunteer services manager of Merrimack Valley Hospice, a member of the Home Health Foundation and Wellforce Health System which also includes Home Health VNA, Circle Home and Hallmark Health VNA. "We can never repay our heroes for what they have given our country, but we can offer high-quality,

compassionate care when they need us most. Just as they have been there for all of us, we want to let them know we're here for them."

Throughout the year, Merrimack Valley Hospice participates in We Honor Veterans by connecting veteran patients with veteran volunteers representing all military branches, recognizing their service and introducing them to veteran-specific resources within the community and the VA. On any given day, 20 to 25 percent of the patients cared for by Merrimack Valley Hospice are veterans, including those at High Pointe House, the state-of-the-art hospice and palliative care residence in Haverhill which offers a comfortable, home-like alternative to hospitalization.

For more information about how to volunteer or support Merrimack Valley Hospice's work with veterans, visit HomeHealthFoundation.org/veterans. To learn more about We Honor Veterans, visit WeHonorVeterans.org/support.

*Merrimack Valley Hospice offers comfort care and palliative services for patients nearing the end of life. Whether individuals are at home or in a hospital, long-term care residence, assisted living facility or High Pointe House, Merrimack Valley Hospice provides compassionate physical, emotional and spiritual care for patients and grief and bereavement support for families and caregivers. Referrals are available seven days a week by calling 800-333-4799. For more information, visit HomeHealthFoundation.org. ♦

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“WEATHER 101” WITH AL!

Al Kaprielian
VALLEY PATRIOT WEATHERMAN

Welcome to February and the last full month of the winter season.

During February the days continue to get longer resulting in increasing daylight. The sun angle continues to get higher in the sky resulting in increasing high temperatures by month's end. Even though we can get some warm days in February we can also get artic air with bitter cold air. February is also known as Blizzard month. Remember the Blizzard of 1978 occurred during the month of February. That storm was highly under-predicted.

The big computer model back then was the LFM (Limited Fine Mesh Model). This model did not indicate a blizzard at all. After the blizzard of 1978 this computer model was discontinued. Recapping January 2020, the month saw many warm days with high temperatures above normal. Boston averaged over 9 degrees above normal for the month. This January ranked in the top 5 in terms of warmest January ever.

Unusually warm weather occurred on Saturday and Sunday January 11th and 12th. On Saturday January 11, new record high temperatures occurred at the following locations: Boston reached 70 degrees, old record 62 degrees in 1975; Worcester reached 63 degrees, old record 58 degrees in 1924; Bradley, CT reached 68 degrees, old record 60 degrees in 1983.

Providence reached 65 degrees, old record 61 in 1975. On Sunday January 12th more new record high temperatures occurred. Boston reached 74 degrees, old record 61 degrees in 1913, 1975, and 2017; Worcester reached 66 degrees, old record was 59 in 2018; Bradley, CT reached 70 degrees, old record 60 in 2018; Providence RI reached 70 degrees, old record 62 degrees in 2018.

Also new record low temperatures occurred on January 11 and 12. With these very warm temperatures some people wore shorts instead of winter coats. Hard to believe wearing shorts during winter in the month of January. Why so warm??

The answer lies in a very strong upper level high pressure system (subtropical high pressure in the Atlantic Ocean). This upper level high pressure system pushed the jet stream to our north putting us on the warm (south side) of the jet stream. With the main jet stream to our north,



this kept the cold artic air locked up well north into Canada. The artic air could not move south into our region. This upper level high pressure system controlled our weather in January.

There was a lack of high pressure in Greenland, Canada known as the Greenland high. When the Greenland high occurs, this keeps the jet stream to our south resulting in more artic air and greater chances of ocean storms producing snow.

Also, January was a relatively dry month with no big storms. There were a few days of snow, however, no big snowstorms occurred. January ended on a quiet note. There was an ocean storm off the Mid Atlantic coast to watch, however, this storm tracked too far to the south and east to cause a major impact to our region. The jet streams did not phase in time to bring the storm closer to the New England coast.

Phasing is the key word in February if we see any big storms. Time will tell how much if any phasing occurs. Also, we will see if the artic air locked up well north in Canada can move south and bring a return to more winter temperatures in February. Stay tuned to next month's article for the answer to these questions. In next month's article we will recap the weather for February and take a look at what to expect in the month of March. In the meantime, enjoy the winter season. ♦



PAYING ATTENTION!

with Tom Duggan



“Big Block” Project at the Corner of Broadway and Ocean Front South

Who Will Enforce the Law In Salisbury?

As of right now, it looks like the state Administration's Seaport Economic Council gave Salisbury a nearly \$1 million grant in 2017 to build the 625 foot boardwalk on Ocean Front South, so that in just a few years the Town of Salisbury would consider allowing this public seaside boardwalk to be connected to the deck of the “Big Block” proposed 235-unit Oceanfront condominium complex that are surely to become apartments.

The Big Block Development Group consists of Capolupo, Nabhan and Mulcahy families who initially planned on constructing this project in 2017.

Most importantly, the Town of Salisbury officials were well aware that this proposed “BIG BLOCK” project violates the 1980 State Executive Order 181 Barrier Beaches. That executive order was enacted to strengthen the protection of barrier beaches in Massachusetts, and orders/directs all relevant state agencies to adopt 7 policies regarding mitigating future storm damage to its barrier beach areas.

Also, in 1985 Salisbury officials signed a US Environmental Protection Agency/ State of Massachusetts Sewer Special Grant condition agreeing [that Salisbury] shall prohibit connections to the sewerage system from any new development

built within a 100-year flood plain, wetland, or barrier beach (Salisbury Beach).

Coastal Zone Management (CZM) and Mass Disaster Recovery Team has raised concerns to the Town of Salisbury that the barrier beach appears to be eroding rapidly in the beach center.

CZM has informed Town Manager Neil Harrington and Town Planner Lisa Pearson that “Based on its coastal setting, CZM is concerned that the potential for storm damage impacts to development in this area is significant and very real, and that inappropriate development will adversely affect the barrier beach resource area’s ability to respond to increased wind and wave energy associated with storms.”

Is there anyone out there willing to force the rogue Town of Salisbury to start following the law? Or will town officials just continue to get away with doing whatever they want to satisfy their money man Wayne Capalupo? It seems only the voters of Salisbury are capable of doing that.

Maybe they will show up at the next Planning Board public hearing at Colchester Room at Town Hall on Feb. 12th and put a stop to it. Given how they voted in the last election, however, I’m not holding my breath.

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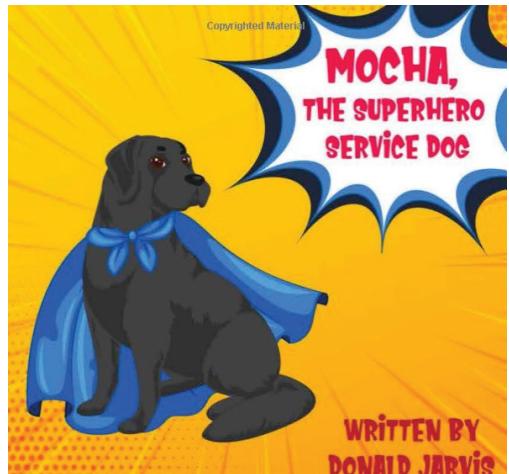
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Hero Veteran Writes Book About His Superhero “Mocha” the Service Dog

Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award Winner and honorably discharged member of the Army National Guard Donald Jarvis of Newbury has had it tough.

Having been critically injured twice in Iraq, Jarvis returned to service a third time before being injured again and coming back home with multiple physical and psychological injuries.



“They gave me a service dog,” Jarvis told The Valley Patriot at the time, “and she saved my life.”

In between donating his time to help other returning veterans adjust to civilian life, making disposal bins for discarded flags, and going through multiple trips to the doctor to care for his various ailments, Jarvis took pen to paper and designed his own comic book for children called “Mocha, The Superhero Service Dog.”

Jarvis said he initially did it for his niece and nephew but quickly

realized he could publish the book on Amazon.

The story of Mocha in the book tells the real story of how Mocha went from an abandoned dog roaming the streets, to becoming a service dog helping a hero veteran get through the numerous physical and psychological challenges that come with civilian life after leaving the battlefield.

“All the money I make on the book goes to medical bills for Mocha, one of the toughest parts of having a service dog is paying the vet bills when they get sick or need medical attention,” he said.

Jarvis says that any money left over after Mocha’s medical bills are paid will go to local veteran charities.

“Mocha, the Superhero Service Dog” is available for \$12.99 on Amazon.

Don Jarvis says that his next project is to turn Mocha’s adventures into a coloring book for kids.

“There’s so much I can do with this concept, and I’m really excited as things start to progress.” ♦



Donald Jarvis of Newbury with his superhero service dog Mocha

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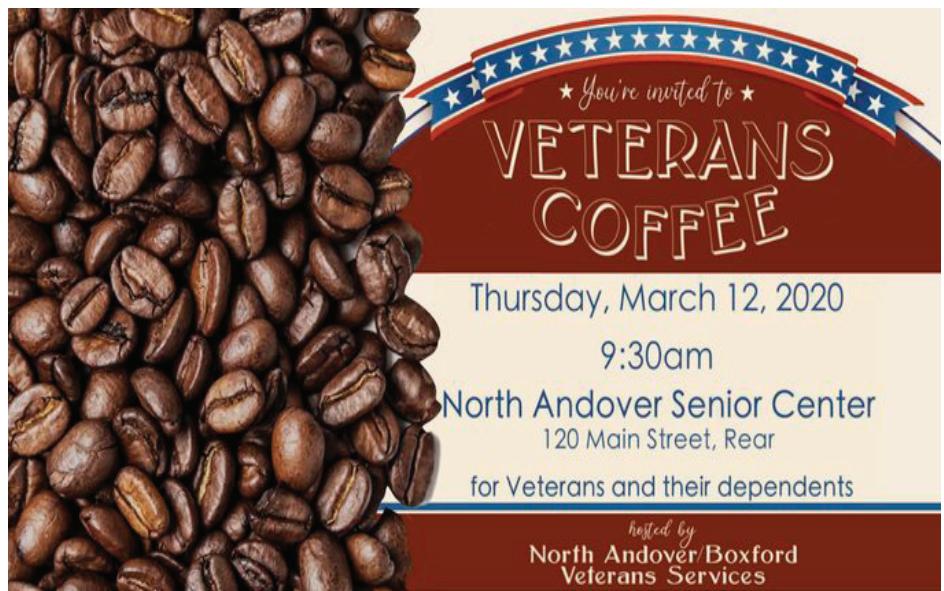
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Chief Vasque Talks Homelessness, the Opioid Crisis & Plummeting Crime Rate

Lawrence Police Chief Roy Vasque appeared on the Paying Attention! Podcast with Tom Duggan last month to talk about homelessness, the opioid crisis, and the plummeting crime rate since he took over the department.

Tom asked the chief about the opioid crisis and how chiefs in the surrounding communities had fewer calls for opioid overdoses but said that the number of overdoses were actually up because addicts are no longer calling for help because of the proliferation of Narcan.

"Statistically," the chief said, "for us we did go up a little bit between 2018 and 2019 when it comes to calls for services for opioid overdoses.

We had 279 overdoses in 2018 compared to 282 in 2019. That's a small increase but it's still a lot. As for fatalities we had 27 in 2018 and 33 in 2019. So, it's true we're not getting the calls that we used to get because everybody is carrying Narcan today.

Our officers can tell you stories where they go into places and NARCAN is hanging from the ceiling in the bedroom with a sign [in case they overdose]. So, everybody has it. What that leads to is ... you and I are out just doing our thing and you overdose, and I give you Narcan and you just keep marching on with your life. There's no call to the police department so that gets lost in the reporting.

Statistics around the Commonwealth are probably going down, but overall, I think it's going up but it's being under reported

DUGGAN: A lot of your grants are tied to calls for service, if the calls are going down because of NARCAN but the abuse is going up, how do you combat that?

"Right now, we are statistically holding steady so it's not much of an increase. I know the surrounding communities like Haverhill, North Andover, and Boxford have much less of an issue. Their numbers may be going down and they're going to have to make their case but right now we have to get our message out there, we are seeing something different than what the statistics say, because we have the boots on the ground and we need to take that into consideration.



"Back in the day, it was all about making arrests. Now we are trying to interact more, whether it's prostitution or opioid use and see if we can break the cycle and that's part of it.

Just like Methuen, we started our own HELP initiative, Heroin, Epidemic Lawrence Partnership and we have Lt. Dan Fleming in charge of that. We also have dedicated detectives who follow up on that and we also have Quincy as you mentioned who goes out and does the follow up as you mentioned, has that kind of interaction with opioid abusers that our officers encounter to see if there's some way we can get these people some help to break the cycle whether they are from here or somewhere else. And if they are from somewhere else, we can hopefully get them back to where they came from, get their family involved and that's what it's all about.

Everybody needs to do their part including us, we can't just say they're from somewhere else and we are done with it.

We have to help them. Certainly part of our strategy is to find out where they are from and see if we can get that community and that family and organizations in their home communities to help us and take it over for us and get them out of Lawrence then hopefully they don't come back and we can reduce our numbers.

I think what everyone is afraid of in Lawrence is that we become the sort of epicenter for all things helping everyone

and nobody else picks up the ball and does their part.

I think that's all we are asking for is that the North Andover's, the Haverhill's and the Boxford's, do their part. You know it's great that everyone wants to come to Lawrence and give them clothing and food but then they turn around and leave. I know you've brought it up before that Lawrence receives some funding for homelessness, I don't know how that works, but I just think that other communities need to do more; there's a lot of people here in Lawrence that are receiving services, even with the great work you are doing with feeding them, at getting them to the methadone clinics and that's great, but I think we want other communities to pitch in and help her out so that Lawrence doesn't become the draw for everyone because it's a drain on all of our services.

We can't turn a blind eye to anybody regardless of where they are from, but I think everyone around us really needs to pick up the ball; that's our message.

I would say the future looks better as far as the homeless problem, I know other communities are now doing more and we have never been doing as much as we are doing now, so that's a positive step. I know it's not happening as quick as people want us to, but at least we're going in the right direction. And there are some committees that won't do anything at all that's a problem.

People need to understand, this isn't

a Lawrence problem, the opioid crisis, I mean we have our issues here and we are addressing those, but it's a national problem. If the drugs didn't come in over the border, we wouldn't have a problem here in Lawrence. If they cut off the supply, there would be no demand, the drug business closes, so to speak.

We have an issue here for sure, but it is a national problem and we need national answers such as treatment and addressing over a prescription of pills. Unless something is done about those other countries that are supplying the drugs to the United States, we are never going to solve this problem. It's a very complex problem.

Going back to the homeless, it needs to be regionalized and people need to come together to do a lot more. Together there's power in numbers and it would have a greater affect.

Do you see a correlation between the opioid and homeless problem and incidental crimes that come with it?

"Once in a while what we see on issues with the homeless and opioids, the midnight shift we might have some businesses broken into but, the crime is way down in Lawrence. We are fortunate that in 2018 we had 40% overall reduction in crime from 2017. This year we are down another 9% from that, which are historic numbers by the way... the best numbers in over 20 years... so, it's a two-year difference of over 46%. We can talk about shootings, in auto theft which are at historic low numbers as well.

We were once the car theft capital of the world; we also were the arson capital of the world, with all the insurance fraud.

Remember those numbers at one time 1,789 cars were stolen in Lawrence in one year and this year we had 164. Of those, 62 were stolen with the keys in the car. So, if you eliminate those who leave their keys in the car, you're talking about 100 vehicles being stolen in the City of Lawrence in one year. So, looking at where we have come from its tremendous when you look at where we are now and I'm hoping that the residents of Lawrence start to see some savings on their car insurance because that's a huge difference. ♦

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Disgracing the Memory of Hero Veteran John Ratka: Where is VNOC One Year After His Passing?

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

It's been over a year since Command Master Chief John Ratka passed away.

John was the Executive Director of Veterans Northeast Outreach Center (VNOC) in Haverhill and winner of The Valley Patriot's Hero Veteran Award for his tireless work helping homeless veterans get off the streets.

John was appointed Executive Director in the late 90s and took VNOC from one building with 22 single rooms for veterans, to owning or managing over 200 units of housing up until his passing in January of 2019.

He created a safe, confidential, and prosperous outreach center for all veterans and their families to assist those in need of critical services, including: mental health counseling, housing assistance, job training, and assistance with VA health care/claims and even helped with simple things like guitar lessons and so much more.

John believed every veteran should be assisted and didn't have it in his heart to say no to any veteran for any reason, no matter what the circumstances. What made John Ratka special was that he always found ways to say YES!

I started working with John years ago when I started doing homeless outreach, but became much closer with him when I started finding homeless veterans on the streets of Lawrence and North Andover about 6 years ago.

VSO NEGLECT BROUGHT ME AND JOHN TOGETHER

I had been getting complaints from veterans about the North Andover Veterans Services Officer, (VSO) Ed Mitchell never being in his office, not returning phone calls and just being unprofessional to veterans in general.

I had gone to town hall across from my office numerous times to find his office empty. I had veterans sitting in my office call and leave messages for him that went unanswered. Eventually I called John, explained that I was not looking to get Mitchell in trouble, but just wanted these veterans to get the benefits they deserved. I asked him if there was a way to go around Ed Mitchell and help these veterans on our own without stepping on toes or making a fuss with the town.

John Ratka agreed and assured me that if I gave him the names of the veterans needing assistance, one of his team members at VNOC would take care of it.

Within 2 hours, I got a call from Jason

Gilbert, saying that his staff member Randy Carter would be handling any veteran issues in North Andover that came across my desk from now on.

Randy Carter called and within 4 hours. He had met with and assisted the veterans who had come to me for help. He filled out the proper paperwork to get them benefits, and took one of those veterans into VNOC as he was days away from being homeless.

In one case, I got a call from a veteran here at The Valley Patriot saying that he was homeless in North Andover, sleeping outside, and that the VSO Ed Mitchell turned him away saying he did not have a North Andover address. I called VNOC at 2 am on a Saturday night. Within minutes I got a call back from John Ratka who conferred me in with Randy Carter. Before the end of the night, they were able to secure a hotel room, bought him some food, and on Monday morning, sent that Veteran to the VA hospital. When he was medically cleared, he went back to VNOC, Ratka and Carter placed him in temporary housing, and within 6 months secured him a job, got him an apartment, and has been living a normal life ever since.

These are just a few examples of the many veterans that I personally sent John Ratka, Randy Carter and Jason Gilbert at VNOC for assistance.

I have also seen the staff at VNOC take money out of their own pockets to assist these Veterans in need to pay electric bills, groceries, and other essentials.

John assured me that if the Valley Patriot called with a veteran in need, the team would call back within the hour and that they were available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

That was protocol ... THEN!

DISGRACING JOHN'S LEGACY

After John had passed away last January, VNOC continued to conduct business as usual at first, with Jason Gilbert as acting Director.

But, for some reason the board of directors suggested that he needed some continued development, so they placed Retired Navy Chief Edward Mitchell in charge of VNOC, the same Ed Mitchell who was the North Andover VSO. I was stunned. It was like a punch in the gut to everyone who knew the history of my relationship with John.

Mitchell's career as North Andover Veteran Service officer was marred with excessive sick days and health issues that forced him into so-called medical retire-



John Ratka and his friend and colleague Randy Carter just a month before John's passing in January, 2019.

ment. Yet, now he was taking a job as head of VNOC?

As of the time of his hiring at VNOC, he was recognized as 100% service-connected permanent and total disabled veteran. That means he was not eligible to go back to work at this capacity until exams and pension was re-evaluated. But, I guess when the director's job comes with a \$100k plus salary it makes you feel pretty healthy very quickly.

Shortly thereafter, for some reason Jason Gilbert left VNOC. Jason was responsible for numerous grants and renewals that raised the bar for every other veteran nonprofit. Other than John, Jason was overseeing all VNOC programs.

After Jason left VNOC in July of 2019, Randy Carter would be moved into his position immediately.

Randy Carter came up through the ranks from case manager, to program coordinator, to projects and program manager. Randy was instrumental in getting the grant and per diem 'transition in place' program in Methuen off the ground that would house homeless veterans in an apartment that they would eventually take over once stabilized with supportive services.

Jason as Program Manager and Randy Program Coordinator ran the Supportive Services for Veterans and Families (SSVF) and all 3 years Randy and the SSVF team met or exceeded the goals of housing homeless veterans or prevented

them from becoming homeless. They served over 1,500 veteran families. Yet, for some reason Randy Carter is no longer an employee at VNOC either! Ed Mitchell told me that he could not tell me why but that he let Randy go and would not let him return. Again, I was stunned.

Both Randy Carter and Jason Gilbert, two people Ratka personally hired and worked with every day, have refused comment publicly.

LOSING CONTRACTS

Since, these two individuals left VNOC, and under the 'leadership' of Ed Mitchell, the agency has not even come close to meeting their obligations and have even lost their contract with Caritas Communities to help veterans with permanent housing at the VA Campus in Bedford.

This program was integral in the mission to ending veteran homelessness due to the location on the VA Bedford Campus.

TURNING VETERANS AWAY

What's more, I recently heard a voice-mail from a veteran who lives in VNOC housing in Haverhill with a mental illness who had an episode from a break down. Instead of finding a way to assisting this hero veteran, as John Ratka would have done, Ed Mitchell banned him from VNOC for life.

This veteran lived in veteran housing at VNOC. I have to say; just on this one case alone, John Ratka is rolling over in

VNOC: PAGE 21



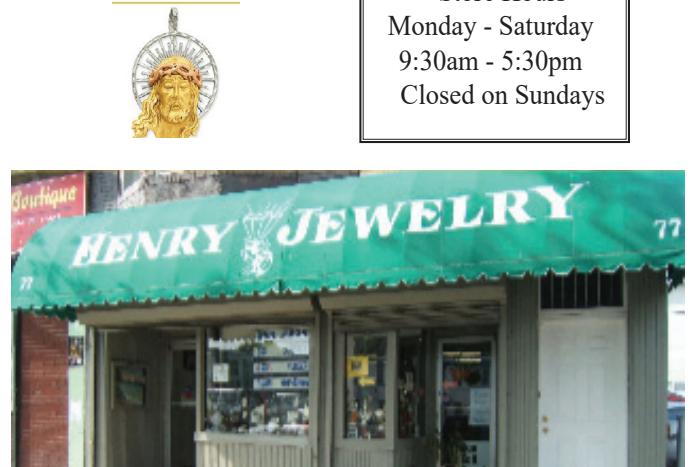
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VALLEY PATRIOT'S 16th ANNIVERSARY BASH

It's hard to believe that we are about to celebrate our 16th Anniversary here at The Valley Patriot. In the last 16 years corrupt politicians have tried to silence us and shut us down. We have been sued (and so far never lost). We have been attacked publicly and our credibility has been called into question numerous times by those who have a stake in promoting lies and political narratives. Yet, here we are, still standing strong 16 years later. This year we are celebrating our 16th Anniversary with our annual Charity BASH Scholarship and Award night at the Firefighter's Relief In, at 1 Market St. in Lawrence (7PM).

SCHOLARSHIPS

This year we will be giving out at least five scholarships:

* Lawrence High School JrROTC Scholarship to a Lawrence High senior enrolled in the JrROTC program. Anyone interested in donating to this scholarship can make out a tax-deductible check to the Lawrence High Alumni Association ECCF and mail it to The Valley Patriot, PO BOX 453, North Andover, MA 01845.

* Greater Lawrence Technical School Scholarship goes to a graduating senior in good standing. Anyone interested in donating to this scholarship can make a check out to "Valley Patriot BASH" and send it to the address above. Please put Gr. Lawrence Tech in the memo so that we can make sure your donation goes to the correct scholarship recipient.

* Dan Coady Memorial Scholarship is given in memory of Dan Coady who was tragically killed in May 2018 on Rt. 495 while assisting state police to get a disabled car towed off the highway. This scholarship goes to any graduating senior in the Merrimack Valley who attended the Thomson Grammar School in North Andover where Dan's kids attend today. Anyone interested in donating to this scholarship can make a check out to "Valley Patriot BASH" and send it to the address above and put Dan Coady's name in the memo. Any student interested in applying for this scholarship can email their personal information, including the college they will be attending to valleypatriot@aol.com.

The Michelle DeLuca Memorial Scholarship will go to a graduating senior from Haverhill High School in good standing going into criminal justice or social work. Anyone interested in donating to this scholarship can make a check out to "Valley Patriot BASH" and send it to the address above and put Michelle DeLuca in the memo box.

BASH AWARDS - At The Valley Patriot's Anniversary BASH we also give out awards to hero veterans, police officers and firefighters as well as community service awards. If you know a cop, firefighter or member of the community whom you would like to nominate for one of these awards please email valleypatriot@aol.com and put the title of the award you are nominating for in the subject box.

DRACUT AMERICAN LEGION SALUTE TO THE MARINES BY THE NEVERLY BROTHERS at 7pm.

Saturday February 15th, 2020 at the Dracut Legion Hall. Free Admission!

Free Coffee, Tea, and No Cover!

NEWBURYPORT BANK DONATES \$5K TO VETERANS COUNT

Newburyport Bank has donated \$5,000 to Veterans Count in support of their 8th Annual Seacoast SOS Gala. The event will be held at the Executive Hangar at Pease International Tradeport in Portsmouth, NH, on May 2, 2020.

Veterans Count, the philanthropic arm of Easter Seals Military & Veterans Services (MVS), provides critical and timely financial assistance and services when no other resource is available to service members, veterans and their families, to ensure

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK



Members of the St. John's Freshman Hockey Team showed up in Lawrence last month to help feed the homeless at the TMF Family Dinner for the Homeless at 2 South Broadway. The kids of St. Johns served food and talked to the homeless about their lives on the streets and their addictions. Coach John Zimini told The Valley Patriot "This is the kind of first hand education about homelessness and addiction that these kids will never forget."

their dignity, health and overall well-being. Ninety percent of dollars raised goes directly to services and resources.

"It's gratifying to support the fine work of Veterans Count," stated Lloyd L. Hamm, President & CEO of the Bank. "They excel at helping service members and their families through a wide range of essential services. And there couldn't be a more enjoyable way to support them than through their annual gala."

NORTH ANDOVER JUNIOR MERCHANTS EXPO, Hosted by North Andover Merchants Association and North Andover Youth and Recreation Services

The North Andover Merchant's Association, along with the Joseph N. Hermann Youth Center, is proud to host the 2nd Annual North Andover Junior Merchant's Expo. This event will provide an opportunity for kids to sell their handmade crafts and artwork or promote their business services. The event is open to, but not limited to, musicians, lawn care service, computer experts, photography services, and bakers. You will be able to sell your products and promote your business by handing out business cards and showing photos or videos of the service you provide.

The community embraced this event last year. Our hope is that the event can support children as creators and entrepreneurs and encourages them to work with their hands, learn project management skills,

put mathematics to use, and explore their creative self-expression.

Contact: Sally Finnimore finnimore@verizon.net Phone: 508-277-2312

Rules and Requirements:

Open to children in grades 4-12 who live in North Andover (or attend a NA school)

Artwork must be made by the artist

Participants must provide their own table and chairs. All children under 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Prizes will be awarded for Best Overall Merchant based on:

1. booth presentation
2. quality of product
3. customer service skills

Online application link: <https://forms.gle/tXdoNQxYzZQpMY6AA>

Or request a printable application at finnimore@verizon.net.

DANA FARBER OPENS NEW FACILITY IN MERRIMACK VALLEY

New site in Methuen offers increased access and expanded services for patients with cancer.

Following a festive ribbon cutting earlier this week, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute is opening a new site this week in the Merrimack Valley offering expanded cancer and blood disorder care and outpatient services for adult patients in the region. The new site, located at 5 Branch Street in

8 Marblehead St.
N. Andover, MA 01845



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Methuen, unites the Dana-Farber physician practices in Lawrence and Methuen into one outpatient location.

With an environment similar to the Dana-Farber Longwood (Boston) location, the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute – Merrimack Valley site has expanded space with 24 exam rooms and 32 infusion bays.

The new space allows patients at Dana-Farber – Merrimack Valley access to many of Dana-Farber's open clinical trials, the ability to get genetic testing and meet with a genetic counselor to learn more about cancer risk based on personal and family history, coordinate care with registered dieticians who have special training in oncology and integrative medicine, and meet with licensed oncology clinical social workers for consultation, guidance and supportive counseling.

In addition, there will be a higher level of comfort and convenience for patients with an expanded waiting room, private infusion bays, changing stations throughout the waiting and infusion areas, infusion chairs with a heated function as well as free onsite parking and a café on the first floor.

There is natural light throughout the space and the windows overlook the landscape. The waiting room features a 30-foot aerial photo depicting the Merrimack Valley and various local landmarks, connecting the community to this new facility.

"We are thrilled to open this new site that will benefit patients in the Merrimack Valley and will offer them enhanced access to Dana-Farber oncologists and care teams. This new site will help us provide the exceptional and convenient cancer care which is an important part of our mission," said Craig A. Bunnell, MD, MPH, MBA, Chief Medical Officer, Dana-Farber.

"This new facility is exciting for patients and it will be great to have the Dana-Farber staff members from Lawrence and Methuen under one roof. Overall, it will be more convenient for patients with brand new, larger, and more comfortable infusion areas. Thank you to Dana-Farber for helping patients on their cancer journey," said Stacey Fusco, a patient from Methuen.

All clinical services are provided on the third floor of the building, over approximately 30,000 square feet.

THREE RECOGNIZED FOR WORK AT NECC

Three Northern Essex Community College employees, Sharon McManus of Danvers, Martha Bixby of Merrimac, and Patricia Portanova of Newburyport, recently received the Employee Recognition Award for the final quarter of 2019.

The Employee Recognition Award recognizes the many and varied contributions of the college's nearly 700 employees. Employees are selected each quarter based on recommendations from supervisors and co-workers. Recipients receive a \$150 certificate to the restaurant or mall of his or her choice.

Bixby, an academic advisor was nominated by Stephanie Wares, NECC's director of the Student Success Hub who praised her saying "She is humble and is always willing to come in early and stay late." Her nomination was supported by colleague Mike Rideout, transfer advisor, who wrote, "Martha is always friendly, cooperative, supportive, thoughtful, and professional...she is an unsung hero." Vanessa Desani, academic advisor and community referral counselor, and Jayne Ducharme, academic advising coordinator, also supported the nomination.

An alumna of NECC, Bixby has worked at the college, in different positions, for 11 years. She earned two Associate of Science degrees from NECC including Computer Information Sciences: Computer Operations and Accounting. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Admin-



FREDDIE SAYS

If only Joel Faretta would review dog food!!

Freddie also Says
EAT AT THE DAILY DOSE
CAFE at PENTUCKET MEDICAL
IN LAWRENCE
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istration, a Master of Business Administration, and a graduate certificate in human resource management from Southern New Hampshire University.

Portanova, holds several positions including associate professor of English, coordinator of liberal arts, coordinator of liberal arts: writing option, and faculty lead for the Center for Liberal Arts. She has taught at NECC for more than five years.

She was nominated by Janel D'Agata-Lynch, coordinator civic engagement, service-learning & community resources. "She has been a constant support and encouragement to the Office of Civic Engagement and Service Learning, working in and out of the classroom to expand civic inquiry and engagement opportunities for students." The nomination was supported by Paula Richards, coordinator service of the service learning faculty fellows program, and Janice Rogers, associate dean liberal arts and student success hub.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a Master of Art in English Literature: Concentration in Creative Writing from Bridgewater State College and a PhD in Rhetoric and Composition from the University of New Hampshire.

McManus, who has worked at NECC for five years, was nominated by Ashley Moore, director of academic, career, and civic engagement, who praised her for among other things "her consistently high on-the-job performance...she is also an excellent team player and she is committed to going the extra mile to make sure the work gets done."

Her nomination was supported by Kim Burns, dean of academic innovations and professional development, Kathleen Bartolini, adjunct faculty, human services, Kelly Saretsky, dean of institutional research and planning.

McManus earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Spanish from the University of New Hampshire, a Master of Higher Education in Leadership from Merrimack College, and is a Certified Gallup Strengths Coach.

EARLY VOTING IN HAVERHILL FOR PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY, TUESDAY, MARCH 3rd

Haverhill City Clerk, Linda Koutoulas, is pleased to announce the times and locations for early voting for the Presidential Primary which debuts for the first time

in Massachusetts this year. Early Voting, enacted into law by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2014, and early voting for the Presidential Primary was added in 2019.

Early Voting for the Presidential Primary runs from, Monday February 24, 2020 through Friday February 28, 2020, during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, from 8am to 4pm, at Haverhill City Hall, 4 Summer Street, in the basement (formerly the RMV location).

Additionally, the City has scheduled Early Voting on Wednesday, February 26, from 8AM to 8PM to allow for voting in the evening. Located at Haverhill City Hall, 4 Summer Street, in the basement.

You need to be a registered voter in Haverhill to vote early, and the deadline to register to vote for this election is February 12th at 8pm – The City Clerk's Office will be open only for voter registration that evening. As this is early voting, no reason is required to vote early.

Once you have voted, your ballot will be secured in a locked vault and delivered to your regular polling location on Election Day to be counted.

You can check your voter status online at sec.state.ma.us. If you are an inactive voter, you will need to provide ID/proof of residence at the time of your vote. Your status can also be checked online.

If you have any questions, please contact the Clerk's office at 978-374-2312 or email Elections Administrator Jim Blatchford at jblatchford@cityofhaverhill.com.

LOCAL FAVORITES TO PERFORM AT THE UNITARIAN CHURCH Feb 16th

Frederick MacArthur, organ, and Neal Ferreira, tenor, will perform on Sunday, Feb. 16, at 4 p.m. at the Unitarian Church, 26 Pleasant St., Newburyport, the second of three concerts in the 2020 Jean C. Wilson Music Series.

Local Newburyport favorites Frederick MacArthur and Neal Ferreira will present works of Bach, Handel, Copland, Verdi, and more. Well-known to audiences throughout the Merrimack region as soloists, MacArthur and Ferreira are now teaming up with powerful results.

Frederick MacArthur is organist at Church of Our Saviour in Brookline and at First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Cambridge. He is in demand in greater Boston as a recitalist and freelance accompanist. He has held numerous positions in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including at Old South Church in Boston and Brown University.

On Feb. 16th, MacArthur and Ferreira's program will include work by Bach, Rinck, Galbraith, Copeland, Ives, Britten, Musto, Wagner, Lalo, and Puccini as well as Spirituals.

Suggested donations are \$20 and \$10 for seniors. Children and students may attend for no charge. For more information about the concert go to bit.ly/wilson_series.

PLANT SALE - The Middlesex Conservation District will be holding its Spring 2020 Plant Sale on 4/24 and 4/25 at Kimball Farm, 400 Littleton Rd., Westford.

All items may be ordered in advance through March 31st for best selection; the sale includes tree/shrub seedlings, perennials, fruits, groundcovers and garden supplies. To order please visit www.middlesexconservation.org or email middlesexconservation@yahoo.com to request a print catalog.

All proceeds benefit the MCD's environmental programs.

NECC PLANS HEALTH CARE INFO SESSION

Thinking of working in health care, but don't know where to begin? Northern Essex Community College will hold a series

NOTEBOOK: PAGE 19



Round 1 of the Mr. FUNNY 2020 Contest at Salvatores

Left to right: headliner John David, winner Joe Catalano, organizer Matt Misci, host Big Jay Baker, winner Harry Corcell, and winner James Hamilton.

Round TWO! of CPFProductions & Sal's Riverwalk Lawrence present Merrimack Valley's Mr/Mrs Funny 2020!

This contest will crown the funniest person in Merrimack Valley in 2020! Night #2 is on Friday February 7th, 10 people will compete to advance to the finale of Friday April 24th for a chance at the crown!

9PM show time ~ doors open at 8:30

Hosted by: Matt Misci

Headliner: James Dorsey

10 people competing for the crown:

- 1) Lloyd Legacy Sharpe
- 2) George Newton
- 3) Marleah Celletti-Nissanbaum
- 4) Uncle Mike Misci
- 5) Shawn Sarro

6) Eric Spagnoli

7) Chris Justice

8) Evan Luongo

9) Dennis Mall

10) Nick Tornaritis

Crowd voting AND judges voting will advance 3 people out of these 10 to the finals on April 24th. Judges are Chris Flahive of CPFProductions, Michael Agricola owner of Salvatore's and Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan. So come to Salvatore's, 354 Merrimack St. in Lawrence, and support your friends and help them win the crown!!!

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*Dinner and Show Ticket includes Reserved premium seating.

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JOEL'S METHUEN FOOD CORNER



The New Miller's Tavern

Joel Faretra

VALLEY PATRIOT FOOD COLUMNIST

I had planned on checking out some Chinese food take out places in Methuen this month, but it seemed you had other plans for me.

The Miller's Tavern opened up on January 9th, finally taking the place of the old Brickhouse Tavern at 105 Pleasant Valley St. As soon as it opened, the questions came flying in so why not dedicate this month's column to the newest restaurant in Methuen.

I made 3 visits over the first couple of weeks. The first visit was with the family for dinner, the second visit was just for drinks with some friends and the third visit was with our new mayor, Neil Perry for an appetizer and a drink.

Food-When I went with the family, we got the Bavarian pretzels and wings. The wings were ok, would have liked them a bit hotter for Buffalo. The pretzels were awesome! Still warm when delivered and the best we have had in a while. My daughter got the cheese pizza. It was a bit undercooked as it seems it was cooked on 2 pizza pans. My wife got a burger and fries. She asked for it well done, and they made sure it was well done. They charged \$2 for cheddar cheese which is a bit much in my book. I got the pulled pork mac and cheese and I was the lucky one out of the group as my meal was delicious. Loaded with jalapenos, plenty of pulled pork and breading on the top! Only was able to finish half but it reheated well for work the next day. They have an unlimited salad bar you can add to your meal that was very popular.

When the mayor and I went, we got the Irish Nachos. Huge plate that we couldn't finish! They were cooked to perfection and the toppings were great. Highly recommend the nachos or pretzels if you are looking for an appetizer before your meal.

Drinks-There is a really good beer selection with 16 beers on tap with more choices in bottles and cans with many of them being from local breweries. They had a large mixed drink and specialty drink menu as well. We went out with friends for drinks on a Saturday night and it was great seeing the place was packed. We sat on the bar side, which has all the same furniture as Brickhouse had in the bar area. Patio was open but not really being used. Service was a bit slow, but it was busy. The had a sangria flight on the drink menu and the wife really enjoyed it! The flight came with 4 different flavors in 6 oz glasses.

Service- We knew going on the first night that it would be a crapshoot. I would say service improved with each visit. There were a lot of little things that will get ironed out as they get settled in. We



didn't get plates, silverware or napkins with the appetizers the first night and no straws in the sangria drinks or with the waters. The biggest issue was with the drink menu. All libations are listed at \$8.95 but would come out charged differently on the bill. The manager was quick to remedy the situation when it was brought to his attention.

By the time I went back the third time, the service was really improved with our waitress being very attentive and making sure we had what we needed (maybe I need to go out with the mayor more often).



If you are going out to eat, it is definitely worth a try. I would give an overall rating of 3.5 beards with the ability to rescore in the future after the staff and management iron out the kinks. I will absolutely be back to try out more of their menu. ♦

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(Courtesy Photo Greater Lawrence Tech)

Gov. Charlie Baker Praises Career Tech Education Efforts at GLTS

ANDOVER -- Gov. Charlie Baker announced last week the launch of a state-wide effort to expand career technical opportunities expanding on a model already successfully in place at Greater Lawrence Technical School (GLTS).

Gov. Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito and approximately 150 guests gathered at GLTS for the announcement by the Administration about the Career Technical Initiative, an effort to expand career technical education opportunities statewide to allow more people to access vocational education throughout the day. The Career Technical Initiative will aim to train 20,000 people in skilled trades over the next four years, and the Baker-Polito Administration has proposed the allocation of \$15 million in the state's fiscal year 2021 budget to support those efforts.

"This is in many ways a great opportunity to create real gains for young people and adults through a proven set of programs where there is already credentialing in place, where everybody knows exactly what you need to do to get the certificate and the credential to be qualified to do the work, and where once you have the work, there is an in-service opportunity to grow and to work your way up," Gov. Baker said.

Through the Career Technical Initiative, schools will offer programming to day students as well as afternoon programming for area high school students looking to access vocational education. Schools will also expand adult career technical programming. As a result of the Career Technical Initiative, vocational schools will offer programs in three shifts throughout the day to day students, area high school students and adults.

Gov. Baker lauded the opportunities for both high school and adult students to access programs in advanced manufacturing and HVAC at GLTS. Last school year, GLTS launched a pilot "after dark" program to allow Lawrence High School students to take their core academic courses at Lawrence High from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and then travel to GLTS to take Machine Tool Technology/Advanced

Manufacturing courses from 2:30-5:30 p.m. This school year, GLTS expanded their "after dark" program to offer training in HVAC as well, and the school was awarded \$100,000 by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education this October to support that programming further.

GLTS also launched an adult advanced manufacturing certificate program in 2018, and is continuing to expand that programming thanks to a \$60,000 grant from the Baker-Polito Administration awarded this December.

Career technical education is in high demand statewide, and approximately 1,000 students apply to GLTS annually, with about 400 being accepted.

"We've worked incredibly hard here at GLTS to provide opportunities for more people to access career technical education, so that they can hone skills to get well paying, reliable jobs with local companies that are actively seeking skilled workers," said GLTS Superintendent John Lavoie. "The Baker-Polito Administration has been immensely supportive, and we're thankful they have recognized the need to expand these opportunities not only here at GLTS, but statewide."

Gov. Baker and Lt. Gov. Polito were joined at Thursday's event by Secretary of Education James Peyser, Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy, Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta and Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera, as well as municipal leaders from Andover, North Andover, Lawrence and Methuen and representatives from other vocational schools in Massachusetts.

"The reason why we are here is that you have it all together. As the Governor said, you are a place that gets it," Lt. Gov. Polito said of GLTS. "You not only get it, you have the means to be able to take these funds and get the job done."

Lt. Gov Polito also stated that Career Technical Initiative programs have significant potential to break down barriers statewide for those looking to enter in-demand fields. ♦

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Proposed Legislation Victimizes Both Women and Children

Joe D'Amore
DRACUT COLUMNIST

In the middle of the day, carrying a heavy jug to collect water from an ancient well a woman in the New Testament encountered Jesus. She was scorned by her community and likely the reason why she went to the well during the hottest part of the day instead of the customary and cooler hours of early morning or early evening. She was avoiding people. She engaged in a dialogue with Jesus who revealed to her His knowledge that she was not married and was now in a relationship with a fifth man, fully subscribed to a cycle of a sinful life. She came seeking water but then came into the realization that the spiritual water she was lacking could be secured.

In another familiar scripture a woman accused of adultery had been slated for punishment to death by stoning. Politically, the accusers, the Pharisees were also trying to trap Jesus into a dilemma to legitimize a method to convict him too. If he advocated for her mercy He would be accused of violating the law, but if He did consent to her execution he would violate His own mandate to uphold the sanctity of life.

Neither of these women had any rights. No man involved in their demise were held responsible. They bore alone the consequences of their actions. Marginalized, discarded and left alone they were victimized not only by their poor choices but by a society who held them responsible alone in their travails.

It is astonishing how a young woman today, carrying an unwanted child, is

similarly situated. So many are lonely, isolated, frightened and dealing with feelings of remorse, guilt and unable to see a break through. Many are also victims of coercion, abuse and even rape.

Legislators in Massachusetts are now promoting legislation that will inflict further abuse on women. Two Bills that expand abortion services into new areas that don't demonstrably help women and also raise the level of excess in terminating life in shocking new ways.

House Bill 3320 and Senate Bill 1209 would legislate: expanded abortion services for late -term abortions for any reason and eliminate the requirement that late-term abortions be performed in a hospital. Additionally, the legislation eliminates the requirement that provides medical care to a child who survives an attempted abortion, eliminates the requirement that a minor under the age of 18 have the consent of a parent, guardian, or the courts and its funding is expanded to provide abortion services to women that cannot afford it.

That last point is compelling. For the vast majority of women facing an abortion decision, poverty is a primary decision driver.

Instead of providing solutions to help women to consider alternative decisions such as birth control, wellness, health and adoption, death is the ultimate solution of this legislation and women are left making an irrevocable decision that could negatively weigh on them for the rest of their lives.

This legislation is wrong. It neither supports women nor a new life without a voice.

Joe D'Amore, Groveland, MA ♦



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Roger Daigle Lived His Life with Love

Brian Genest
DRACUT COLUMNIST

A bright light has gone out in Dracut. Former Selectman Roger Daigle, a well-known citizen who was well known for his strong opinions about our town, passed away January 15th at 92 years young. He was truly a member of the Greatest Generation, a man who loved his family, his country and his community for his whole, long and well-lived life.

To know Roger Daigle was to love him. At his funeral, one of his four daughters, Drucilla Fitzgerald, eulogized their father with some very personal and touching stories that made those gathered to remember his life nod their heads in agreement, laugh and cry. She was kind enough to let me share them here in remembrance of his life, his legacy and his sense of humor.

"Obstinate, cheap, opinionated, old-fashioned, chauvinistic, closed-minded... these are just a few terms that people have used to describe my dad. Truth be told, I have used these terms, at one time or another, to describe my dad. But those people who really knew my dad knew him also as a faithful husband, a loving father, a dedicated citizen, and a doting grandfather. A man of deep faith and integrity, a man who shared his knowledge with anyone who cared to listen – and even some who didn't want to."

Anyone who met Roger Daigle would have been smart to listen to him. He was full of wisdom, stories and knowledge. Conviction, facts and common sense guided his life.

"He enjoyed sharing his thoughts, ideas, and beliefs with the citizens of Dracut on his cable show Inside Dracut Politics. Despite the title, the political treatises went beyond the town borders. He spent hours researching and preparing for the show."

Research he did. Roger Daigle's office was his kitchen table and it was surrounded by organized stacks of file folders, legal pads and newspaper clippings that covered every imaginable topic, from decades gone by to the present day. He could quickly thumb through the pile to retrieve exactly what he was looking for.

Roger Daigle loved to sit at that table and talk and he loved to talk politics. But one of his favorite subjects was his family. He especially liked to reminisce about life with his wife of 64 years, Priscilla, who passed away in 2017. He lovingly called her "my redhead" and he always had a sparkle in his eye, a smile on his face and joy in his voice when he did so.

"Dad's heart really shone bright when Mom was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. He vowed to care for her at home as long as he could. And he did, with some outside help and with our assistance. He dressed her, took care of her bathroom needs, fed her, and told her every day that he loved her."

Roger Daigle loved his country and his community, too.

"Dad had a calling to public service. He was a Navy veteran, and after moving to Dracut in 1957, he worked on several boards and committees. He tried hard to teach us that good citizenship was important and that meant educating ourselves on the issues of the day."

Roger Daigle continually educated himself and set an example for good citizenship.

"Dad often told me that one of the things he missed most was playing golf. It was a sport he and Mom played together and greatly enjoyed. So, I'm thinking Dad already has his tee time set at Heavenly Acres Country Club. Hit 'em straight, Dad."

If anyone was a straight shooter, it was Roger Daigle. All of us in Dracut and far beyond should be inspired by his life of dedication, devotion and dignity. May he rest in peace, with gratitude from his family, friends, community and country.



— Brian Genest is chairman of the Dracut Republican Town Committee and a member of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee representing the Second Essex & Middlesex district of Andover, Dracut, Lawrence and Tewksbury. ♦

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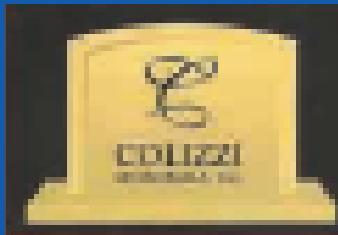
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PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN, (C) 2018

Above left: Juan Bautista Mejia Arias lays face down on the ground after taking six bullets in the back before police arrived at the scene back in 2018. Middle photo: Lawrence Police Sgt. Mike Simard does chest compressions to try and revive Arias. Above right: Police evidence markers note the shell casings around the body after being covered with a sheet.

Lowell Man Charged with 2018 Hampshire St. Execution in Lawrence

The Essex County District Attorney has charged Anderson Jorge Cruz, 21, of Lowell, in Salem Superior Court in connection with the execution-style murder of Juan Bautista Mejia Arias, 39, in Lawrence back in June of 2018.

Judge Salim Tabit ordered him held without bail.

The case is scheduled for a pre-trial conference on February 25, 2020.

The defendant was indicted by an Essex County Grand Jury on August 16, 2019 for murder.

Cruz has been in federal custody since his arrest on January 23, 2019 for heroin and fentanyl trafficking.

He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute and possession with intent to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin and fentanyl and other drug trafficking offenses.

Cruz has been in custody since his arrest on Jan. 23, 2019, along with co-defendant Joshua Ramos-Rios. Cruz is scheduled to be sentenced before U.S. District Court Judge William G. Young on Jan. 14, 2020.

Cruz is represented by Attorney Edward Hayden.

AN EXECUTION ON ALDER AND HAMPSHIRE STREET

Lawrence police were called to Hampshire and Alder Streets early Wednesday evening June 6, 2018 for a call of shots fired “one man down”.

The Valley Patriot was on the scene shortly before police arrived and witnessed the arrival of police at the scene as gang members stood around and watched. Lawrence Police Sgt. Mike Simard found a man in his 30s wearing red, face down on the sidewalk with at least six bullet wounds to

the back.

Sgt. Michael Simard did CPR chest compression on the victim before backup arrived but could not revive him. This was Lawrence’s 3rd murder for 2018. At this time the year prior, (2017) Lawrence had 8 reported murders.

According to witnesses, the victim came out of a bodega on Hampshire and Alder Street after purchasing groceries, and crossed Hampshire Street headed towards the Arlington School when a black Hyundai, Santa Fe with a black roof rack and five point rims pulled up with at least three occupants in the car.

Video obtained by the Valley Patriot from a local business shows the getaway car pulling up to the victim, two men in the front seat and a third man stepping out of the vehicle from the back firing the shots

that killed the victim.

Police could not get a plate number on the car, but it was identified with Pennsylvania license plates.

The victim, wearing a red shirt was in a gang neighborhood well known to use red hats, shirts and sneakers as their gang colors.

The District Attorney’s Office, which micromanages local police on murder cases, refused to give the public a press release with details on the crime for more than 24 hours after the incident.

Video of the execution is on the Valley Patriot website. Police believe that the other two accomplices will be identified shortly and will be charged. Sources close to the investigation say that the execution style murder was a gang retaliation. ♦

Illegal Alien in Lawrence Once Ordered Deported, Sentenced for Identity Theft

Defendant was previously ordered deported, never left, instead assumed identity of a U.S. citizen born in Puerto Rico

BOSTON – An illegal alien from the Dominican Republic formerly residing in Lawrence pleaded guilty on Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2020, in federal court in Boston to Social Security and benefit fraud.

Cesar Franco Lara, 37, pleaded guilty to one count of false representation of Social Security number and one count of theft of government money. Pursuant to the plea agreement, Franco Lara will receive a sentence of 20 months in prison. U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin scheduled sentencing for May 13, 2020.

On Aug. 5, 2016, Franco Lara applied for a Massachusetts identification card using the name, date of birth and Social Security number of a United States citizen born in Puerto Rico.

On Aug. 18, 2016, he used that Massachusetts identification card to apply for and receive nearly \$3,500 of MassHealth benefits in the U.S. citizen’s name. In an effort to determine the true identity of the defendant, law enforcement found a non-immigrant visitor visa application bearing the defendant’s photograph and fingerprints.

This application was refused by the Department of State in 2015. When arrested on federal charges, Franco Lara had on him a MassHealth ID card in the U.S. citizen’s name. His finger-

prints were found to be a match of the fingerprints on file from the refused visa application.

The charges of false representation of a Social Security number provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release, a fine of \$250,000, restitution and forfeiture. The charge of theft of government funds provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years supervised release, a fine of \$250,000, restitution and forfeiture. Franco Lara will be subject to deportation proceedings upon completion of his sentence. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Jason Molina, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; and Phillip Coyne, Special Agent in Charge of Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Boston Field Division made the announcement today.

Vital assistance was provided by the U.S. Marshals Service’s Fugitive Task Force. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Lindsey E. Weinstein and David G. Tobin of Lelling’s Major Crimes Unit are prosecuting the case. ♦

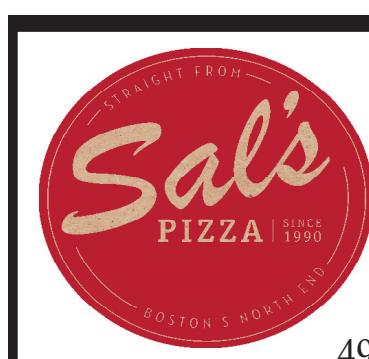
BOSTON – An illegal alien from the Dominican Republic, formerly residing in Lawrence was sentenced on Friday, Jan. 24, 2020, in federal court in Boston for Social Security fraud and aggravated identity theft.

Freddy Tejada-Diaz, 50, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns to two years and one day in prison. Tejada-Diaz will be subject to deportation proceedings upon completion of his sentence. In August 2019, Tejada-Diaz pleaded guilty to one count of false representation of Social Security number and one count of aggravated identity theft.

On Aug 1, 2016, Tejada-Diaz applied for a Massachusetts identification card using the name, date of birth and Social Security number of a Puerto Rican born United States citizen. At the time of

his arrest in April 2019, Tejada-Diaz had an arrest warrant out of Plymouth Superior Court for drug charges and a warrant of removal issued out of a New York immigration court. Tejada-Diaz was identified, among other things, from a fingerprint match to his immigration file bearing his photo, which showed that he was previously ordered removed on Sept. 5, 1996 but did not report to his scheduled immigration hearing. Instead, on Sept. 30, 1996, Tejada-Diaz obtained a Massachusetts identification card in the name of the United States citizen and, until his recent arrest, had been using that identity ever since.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Lindsey E. Weinstein of Lelling’s Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case. ♦



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Alex Dubow, member of the Freshman Hockey Team at St. John's Prep. Hockey Team sits with a homeless man at the TMF Family Dinner for the Homeless in Lawrence listening to how this man became homeless and his struggles with addiction.



Methuen Firefighters Danielle Grenier and Derek Michienzi participated in The 4th Annual BFit First Responder Challenge on Sunday, January 26 at TD Garden. This one-of-a-kind event invites both first responders and the community to climb in the Garden to benefit the families of fallen First Responders. The event takes place to raise awareness around health & wellness. The proceeds raised will benefit first responder charities. In full firefighter gear, our two competitors ran all of the stairs at the Garden as well as the concourse areas from the bottom to the top of the arena. Congrats to Danielle and Derek on their tremendous accomplishment for a terrific cause



Congrats to The Methuen High School Gymnastics team on its win over Andover this week and this winning an MVC title for the first time since 1998!


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Key Public Safety Initiatives Established by Legislature Go into Effect

Rep. Linda Dean Campbell

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

At the end of last year, the State Legislature passed two laws that will greatly benefit our public health and safety as we move into 2020: one to reduce distracted driving from cell phone use and one to protect youth from nicotine addiction.

A new law prohibits drivers from holding a cell phone or electronic device while driving.

The use of cell phones while driving has made our roads more dangerous, tragically resulting in injuries and deaths that should be easily preventable. Data thankfully indicates that driver cell phone use is beginning to decline, but we must accelerate this trend. In Massachusetts, texting while driving has been illegal for a decade, but as people have begun using their phones for navigation, music, and more, there needs to be a more comprehensive policy. This led the Legislature to join many other states in passing a hands-free driving law.

Drivers may interact with their phones through hands-free voice communication, as long as it only takes a single tap or swipe to activate voice communication. Phones may be used for navigation as long as they are mounted to the dashboard or windshield and only require a tap or swipe. The law includes exceptions for first responders and in cases of emergency.

The penalty for violating the law will be a fine of \$100 for a first offense, \$250 for a second offense, and \$500 for a third or subsequent offense. A driver's education course on distracted driving will also be required for a second or subsequent offense. Only a third or subsequent offense will affect one's insurance. Starting February 23, 2020, warnings will be issued to those who violate this law, and full penalties will be issued starting March 31, 2020.

Vaping products are causing a new generation to become hooked on nicotine.

Another issue for public health and safety that warrants urgent attention is the sharp uptick in youth nicotine use through vaping products. For decades in Massachusetts, youth tobacco use was steadily declining – but due to the recent

emergence of vaping devices, now 20% of Massachusetts high school students vape or smoke e-cigarettes. These teens are lured in by high doses of nicotine, over 8,000 kid-friendly flavors, and inexpensive prices.

Additionally, in recent months, over 40 people in the U.S. have died and more than 2,000 others have fallen ill from respiratory conditions that authorities have linked to vaping. The use of these products carries serious health risks.

In response, Governor Baker declared a public health emergency in September 2019 and issued a temporary ban on the sale of vaping products. The Legislature then enacted first-in-the-nation legislation that requires licenses for vape retailers, steepens the penalties for selling vaping and tobacco products to minors, limits the nicotine content in vaping products, and bans the sale of flavored vaping and tobacco products, including mint and menthol. The ban on flavored vaping product sales is now in effect, and the ban on menthol cigarette sales will take effect on June 1, 2020.

This law makes great progress toward protecting youth from the dangers of these highly addictive and high-octane nicotine products. At the same time, we recognize that we must expand resources to help individuals who are looking to quit their nicotine and tobacco use. To that end, the law requires health insurers, including MassHealth, to cover FDA-approved products and counseling services that help people to quit.

Because this law protects our youth from addiction while expanding resources for those looking to quit, it has the support of many public health groups in Massachusetts and across the nation, including the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association. This law is a win for our children and our public health that I hope other states will follow.

State Representative Linda Dean Campbell represents the cities of Methuen and Haverhill in the State Legislature and serves as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs. She can be reached at Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov or (617) 722-2380.

For Minute to Minute **BREAKING NEWS**

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IN YOUR CORNER with SENATOR DIZOGLIO

Lifting Our Voices at the State House

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,

We've seen in recent years how non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) are all too often abused to hide the misdeeds of harassers and abusers by requiring the legal silencing of victims. They have fostered a culture of intimidation and disrespect and only in recent years have brave victims come forward with their painful stories of harassment or outright assault.

Harvey Weinstein and Steve Wynn, for instance, sexually harassed or assaulted hundreds of women and were able to move undetected from one victim to the next by using NDAs to cover up their misdeeds and seek out new targets.

We will also never forget when it was exposed that the leadership of the Catholic Church had covered up decades of child sexual molestation, abuse and rape. One tool used to silence child victims and cover up assaults in the church was the NDA.

These same hush agreements are also being used right here, in our state and municipal governments, using your public taxpayer dollars. In the Massachusetts House of Representatives alone, at least 33 NDAs have been handed out by the current Speaker of the House.

Some progress has thankfully been made on this issue in the Massachusetts State Senate, where last year I filed and passed a bill that completely bans the use of NDAs in our chamber. While I celebrate this progress at the State House, there is still so much more work to be done statewide.

Recently, I was honored and humbled to be joined at the State House by former Fox News reporters and current empowerment advocates Gretchen Carlson and Julie Roginsky. They joined me for a call to action regarding the continued abuse of NDAs in cases of harassment and assault in our government and across Massachusetts.

In this bipartisan, good government effort, we were joined by both Democrats and Republicans alike. Democratic Congresswoman Lori Trahan joined us, along with Republican State Representative Alyson Sullivan. Attorney Mitchell Garabedian, who you may remember had a role in the movie "Spotlight," based on his work representing hundreds of victims of clergy sexual abuse, was also a speaker at our call to action.

The goal of the event was to call for the passage of legislation that I filed - Sen-



ate Bill 929, An Act concerning sexual harassment policies in the commonwealth. The bill would ban the use of taxpayer dollars from being used to silence people through NDAs and it would prevent such agreements from being forced on victims of sexual harassment and assault in the private sector. The bill in no way strips a victim of their right to maintain their confidentiality. It simply ensures that predators are not able to keep their abuse a secret so that they are able to continue to move from one victim to the next, undetected. This is a public safety issue, a transparency and accountability issue, and a workers' rights issue.

Both the Governor and the Speaker continue to insist, however, that our tax dollars pay for these hush agreements across our government.

It's past time to make policy changes, not only to help those who have already been silenced but also to protect potential future victims from abusers who could be hiding in plain sight. NDAs perpetuate harassment and outright assault and place others at risk by keeping these offenses secret.

These states have been proactive in reforming outdated laws around NDAs. California, Maryland, New Jersey, Tennessee, Vermont and Washington have banned them in abuse cases.

Massachusetts has fallen short and can no longer sit on the sidelines. This is our opportunity to do the right thing and get on the right side of history.

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me via email at diana.dizoglio@masenate.gov or phone at (617) 722-1604.

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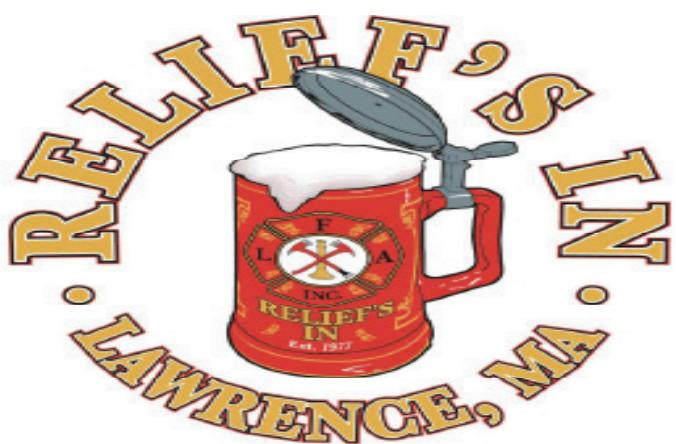
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IRS Employee from Lawrence Charged with Filing Hundreds of False Tax Returns

BOSTON – An employee of the IRS Service Center in Andover was charged today with filing over 500 false tax returns for herself and other individuals.

Jennifer Beth True, 44, of Lawrence, was charged with wire fraud and aggravated identity theft.

True made her initial appearance today in federal court in Boston.

According to charging documents, True has been employed by the Internal Revenue Service for over 22 years. In her current position as a Lead Contact Representative, she assists team members in responding to difficult and complex taxpayer inquiries. Throughout her employment, True has been trained in tax law, ethics, information protection and disclosure, privacy, identity theft and identity protection.

It is alleged that True electronically filed over 590 tax returns for herself and other taxpayers between 2012 and 2017, in violation of IRS rules prohibiting employees from “Engaging in the preparation of tax returns for compensation, gift, or favor.” True received between \$40 and \$100 per return that she prepared and prepared the vast majority of the tax returns on her personal computer using TaxAct software.

The investigation revealed that between approximately February 2012 and April 15, 2018, True prepared at least 70 IRS Forms 1040 – U.S. Individual Income Tax Returns – for taxpayers that included materially false items such as false individual retirement account deductions, false medical expenses, false and inflated unreimbursed business expenses and/or false tax preparation fees. Some returns also included false child and dependent care credits.

Additionally, True allegedly amended

one taxpayer’s income tax returns for three prior years, in order to claim false deductions. Numerous taxpayers told investigators they had not provided True with the false information and that they did not know that True was including such false information on the returns she prepared.

In addition, on or about Feb. 15, 2015, True electronically filed her own personal IRS Form 1040 for the year 2014. True claimed seven dependents, including a taxpayer who was not True’s dependent and who had paid True to prepare and file her tax returns. As a result of claiming the taxpayer as a dependent, True’s tax obligation for 2014 was reduced. This taxpayer never gave True permission to claim her as a dependent.

The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine. The charging statute for aggravated identity theft provides for a mandatory sentence of two years in prison to be served consecutive to any other sentence imposed, up to one year of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; William Kalb, Special Agent in Charge of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, New York Field; and Kristina O’Connell, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service’s Criminal Investigation in Boston, made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristina E. Barclay, of Lelling’s Public Corruption Unit, is prosecuting the case. ♦

Bell-Aire Music & Event Lighting Named Winner in 2020 WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Awards®

DJ Rick Bellanti and Bell-Aire Music & Event Lighting was announced a winner of the 2020 WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Awards®, an accolade representing the top wedding professionals across the board in quality, service, responsiveness, and professionalism reviewed by couples on WeddingWire.

A leader in the global wedding planning industry, WeddingWire continues its celebration of local wedding vendors with the announcement of its twelfth annual WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Awards® winners. To determine these distinguished wedding professionals, WeddingWire analyzed reviews across more than 20 service categories, from venues and caterers to florists and photographers to find the most highly rated vendors of the year.

These winners exhibit superior professionalism, responsiveness, service, and quality when

interacting with the millions of consumers who turn to WeddingWire to help

ease their wedding planning process each month. Wedding professionals who win WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Awards® are members of WeddingPro, the leading B2B wedding brand.

As the largest marketplace and community for wedding professionals, WeddingPro connects businesses with more than 13 million visitors per month who are planning weddings on WeddingWire and The Knot, as well as with hundreds of thousands of pros in the industry. Through its online marketplaces, educational programs and community-building events, WeddingPro is dedicated to helping wedding professionals build relationships with couples and pros that grow their businesses.

Bell-Aire Music and Event Lighting has won this prestigious award an unprecedented twelve years in a row! Congratulations DJ Rick Bellanti and Bell-Aire Music and Event Lighting. ♦

Fugitive Jose Betances Arrested in Dominican Republic for 1990 Execution Murder in Lowell

Jose Armando Betances, also known as Jose Almando Betances Urena, a fugitive wanted for murder, has been turned over to the FBI following his arrest in the Dominican Republic.

Special Agents from the FBI Boston Division’s Violent Crimes Task Force, along with an officer from the Lowell Police Department, escorted Betances from the Dominican Republic to Logan International Airport on a flight that is scheduled to arrive this evening. The FBI worked with the Lowell Police Department and leveraged its international resources to locate Betances and bring him back to Massachusetts.

Betances is wanted for the murder of Andrew Alexander on May 12, 1990, in Lowell, Massachusetts. An arrest warrant was issued by Lowell District Court on May 13, 1990, after Betances was charged with allegedly shooting Alexander between the eyes with a .32 caliber revolver. A Middlesex County Grand Jury returned an indictment charging Betances with murder on June 7, 1990, and as a result of that indictment, the Middlesex Superior Court issued a capias warrant for Betances’ arrest.

A federal arrest warrant was issued by the United States District Court in Massachusetts on August 16, 1990 for Betances on a charge of unlawful flight to avoid prosecution which holds a maximum imprisonment of five years.

Investigators located Betances, 58, in the Dominican Republic in January 2017. Through coordination with the U.S. Department of Justice-Office of International Affairs and the Middlesex County District Attorney’s Office, an extradition package, including an application for a provisional arrest warrant, was prepared and presented to Dominican authorities by the State Department.

On July 8, 2019, the FBI was notified that the Dominican Republic Supreme Court issued a warrant for Betances’ arrest, and on November 12, 2019, with the assistance of the FBI’s Legal Attaché office in Santo Domingo, Betances was arrested outside his residence and held in custody pending extradition back to Massachusetts.

“Mr. Betances’ life on the run for almost 30 years has ended with him in handcuffs, and we can only hope this arrest brings

some level of closure to Mr. Alexander’s family,” said Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Division. “Violent offenders like him need to understand that no matter where they hide, or for how long they run, our investigators will track them down, and bring them to justice.”

“Although just shy of 30 years, persistent and hard work have resulted in the arrest of this suspect. This heinous crime was committed in broad day light in front of many witnesses, many of whom were children. I hope this sends a clear message that the Lowell Police Department has strong partnerships with many law enforcement agencies. We will continue to foster and support those relationships to ensure that our combined efforts guarantee that crimes committed against our community are diligently investigated,” said Raymond Kelly Richardson, Superintendent of Police, Lowell Police Department.

“With the help of our partners, defendants are brought forward to answer for their crimes. I would like to thank our FBI partners, the U.S. Department of Justice of International Affairs and the U.S. State Department along with the Middlesex County District Attorney’s office for not only assistance in this investigation and apprehension of a violent offender, but also for the work they do every day.”

“The return of Jose Betances is the result of collaborative work among several agencies. For the past thirty years, the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office, the Lowell Police Department and the FBI Boston Division’s Violent Crimes Task Force have consistently shared information and implemented strategies to have the alleged perpetrator brought back to Middlesex County to be tried for the charges against him. It is our hope, which is shared by the victim’s family, that this case will now be able to move forward,” said District Attorney Marian Ryan.

Upon arrival, Betances was returned to the custody of the Lowell Police Department and prosecuted by the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office. His initial arraignment was Monday, February 3, in Woburn Superior Court. ♦

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Haverhill, Lawrence Get State Grants to Boost Police Staffing or Overtime Pay

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Haverhill and Lawrence are among 16 communities sharing \$4.6 million in state money to boost staffing levels.

Haverhill received \$255,200, while Lawrence received almost \$1 million from the Massachusetts Municipal Public Safety Staffing Grant program. The money may be used to restore, retain or hire personnel, or for overtime, if needed, to provide adequate shift coverage.

Haverhill Police Chief Alan R. DeNaro thanked Gov. Baker's office in a statement Friday. He said, "The grant allows cities like Haverhill to bridge the financial gap

needed to assist with proactive community-oriented policing."

Lawrence Mayor Daniel Rivera said the annual state allotment has helped that city "to consistently grow our Police Department. That growth has directly resulted in the success we have seen reducing crime numbers to a 20-year low."

"We are very proud of the strong relationships we have with communities across the Commonwealth and we are grateful for the life-saving work of our first responders," said Gov. Charlie Baker. "These funds will allow 16 public safety agencies to maintain their emergency response capabilities and keep their cities and towns safe."

NOTEBOOK: FROM PAGE 9

of Information Sessions highlighting the various health programs offered at the associate degree and certificate level.

The information sessions will be held once a month beginning in February in the Dr. Ibrahim El-Hefni Allied Health & Technology Center, 414 Common St., Lawrence, at 5:30 p.m. information sessions are free and open to the public. The dates are February 12th, March 25th, April 15th, and May 20th.

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The Great Vitamin Debate Continues

Rick Bellanti

HEALTH & WELLNESS COLUMNIST

Should we take daily multivitamin supplements? Are they prescribed by a doctor or nutritionist? Are they beneficial to our daily diet? Do we "Need" to take them? There are so many questions when you are seeking advice about vitamins. The answer is both yes and no.

Will taking a daily

multivitamin cure my health issues? Through the years research on multivitamin supplements have had mixed reviews and the newest most reported research on them doesn't really show that they can lower any health risks such as heart disease, diabetes or even some cancers as was reported in the past.

Will Vitamin C help me avoid a cold? This is actually a myth. It's always been touted as a cure-all to help in prevention in the battle of common colds and combating coughing, sneezing, sore throats etc. One study years ago said it "might" reduce the length of a cold by one day. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables daily, like berries, citrus fruits, peppers, broccoli and you'll have enough vitamin C to help you stay healthy from colds. Stay away from fruit juices which have way too much sugar added and no health benefits at all.

Most doctors and dieticians will agree that some sort of daily multivitamin isn't such a bad idea if you are not eating a proper diet of fruits and vegetables and it is also quick and convenient if you are on the go in this busy world we now live in. Unfortunately, taking a multivitamin, even daily, will not give you any major lifesaving benefits. The best alternative is quite simple, get your daily vitamins, minerals and nutrients through a varied diet of fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats and proteins and, of course, healthy fats.

Over the years many studies have shown the benefits of vitamins and minerals and how essential they are in our daily diet. Research suggests that vitamins may help prevent many health problems including cancer or heart disease. What you have to know is, much of this research is conducted on vitamin-containing food we eat, not necessarily vitamin supplements. If your daily food intake consists of vitamin rich fruits and vegetables, then you are most likely getting all the vitamins you need directly from the natural food source., or so we thought, (please read on)

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What we do know is that, vitamins and minerals supplement your body with needed nutrients daily, and most of it should come naturally from our diets, the issue we are now facing is the way fruits and vegetables are now being cultivated and between the pesticides used and depleted soils from farming continuously year after year through generations, our food is just not as nutrient rich as it was fifty years ago. Modern intensive agricultural methods have stripped increasing amounts of nutrients from the soil in which the food we eat grows, fruits and vegetables grown decades ago were much richer in vitamins and minerals than the varieties most of us get today.

That being said, fruits and vegetables are still the best sources for vitamins and minerals in our diet but taking a multivitamin along with them could help the tradeoff of losing the vital nutrients some of our food is now lacking.

Keep in mind some forms of over the counter supplemental vitamins are better absorbed by the body than others. If you take a supplement orally, you may not be getting the full dosage as listed on the bottle. That is because it has to go through the whole digestive tract before it becomes absorbed in your small intestine. So, some of the vitamins and minerals are lost in this process. The better-quality supplement brands list both the amount of vitamin/mineral in the supplement, along with the "elemental" amount of that vitamin/mineral (how much will actually be absorbed).

Don't stop eating your vegetables, in fact, eat more and add in a supplement if you want, it's not going to hurt. Try to stick to more natural vitamin companies and read labels. Supplements are not regulated by the FDA in the same way that food and drugs are. The FDA does not review these supplements for safety or efficacy before they hit the market.

Supplements are not a good idea for people with certain kinds of health conditions. They also can keep some medications from working as well as they should. Just like anything else, always talk with your doctor before you add any to your diet. Until next month be well.

Rick Bellanti is a wellness columnist and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs and has lost 160lbs since the start of 2015. You can find Rick on Facebook at: Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti ♦

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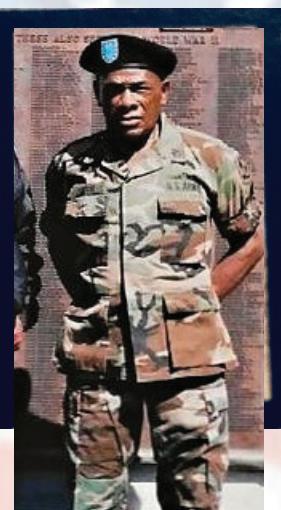
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LATINOS: FROM PAGE 2

Party's outreach to the Hispanic community, serving as a Senior Advisor to the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and as DNC Director of Hispanic Outreach. Prior to joining the DNC, he served as a Senior Advisor to U.S. Senator John Kerry. From 1994 to 2001, he was appointed to senior-level positions in the Clinton Administration, including Chief of Staff at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), Special Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff to President Clinton, and Director of Regulatory Reform at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). In 2003, Reyneri was chosen as one of the top 100 Most Powerful Latinos by PODER magazine. Currently serves on the Board of the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and as Vice Chair of the National Utilities Diversity Council, and previously served as a Director on the Board of the National Hispanic Medical Association and on the Advisory Board of the Kellogg Electricity Market Initiative.

Previously, the EParaTodos Committee held its first event at Tekila's Mexican Restaurant, during the month of May in 2019. Rufus Gifford was invited as the Keynote Speaker, who served as the United States Ambassador to Denmark from 2013-2017; a reality television star with his show, The Ambassador, featured in Netflix; and a former candidate for U.S. Congress in Massachusetts's 3rd congressional district. He was the Finance Director for Barack Obama's presidential re-election campaign in 2012.

Later during the month of July, the LatinX Networking was held at Bocaditos. Jonathan D'Oleo was the Keynote

Speaker, who is the author of the books: Emprende Dinámica and Ideas Claras; He is a former Wall street Stockbroker and the managing Director of the consulting firm D'Oleo Analytica based in Miami, FL.

The next one will be on February 25th, 2020 (location yet to be determined) and the Keynote Speaker will be Josiane Martinez, Founder, CEO and Creative Director of Archipelago Strategies Group. Josiane holds 18 years of experience working in public policy, cross cultural communications, public affairs and public administration. Prior to founding Archipelago Strategies Group, she served as Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants.

At ASG, she has led campaigns for diverse clients, including a record-setting Open Enrollment campaign for the Massachusetts Health Connector, and groundbreaking community engagement campaigns for the City of Boston that engaged thousands of residents. She holds an MBA in Marketing from Simmons College and a BA in Public Communications and Political Science from the University of Puerto Rico.

With this type of initiatives, —the alumni formed— Entrepreneurship committee, volunteers to support the EParaTodos' mission: which is accelerating economic and social impact through entrepreneurship. Continuing on the legacy that changed their lives as individuals, in context with their communities.

For more info about:
EParaTodos: <https://eparatodos.org/>

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VNOC: FROM PAGE 7

his grave.

This vet lives on a fixed income and can't even use the VNOC food pantry.

NON VETS GETTING VET BENEFITS

There is also housing in Lawrence that was set up for homeless veterans with VNOC grant money and other veteran funds, but now houses two civilian tenants and get this, one of them is also the housing manager for VNOC. The other is their sister who is not a veteran.

They also use another apartment VNOC owns in Haverhill that can go to a homeless veteran but is being used as an office.

I got a text from another veteran who says since Mitchell has taken over, veterans at VNOC are being neglected and forgotten about.

This vet said that the CFO of VNOC actually questioned his veteran status, one of the highest insults any veteran can receive.

Ironically, the CFO, himself is not a veteran and may not even be a citizen, but, that will be another story for a future column.

SQUANDERING JOHN'S LEGACY

One of the things that made John Ratka so special was his insistence that almost every single person who worked at VNOC be a veteran, from the guy who sweeps the floors to the people who manage the grants. Yet, what the new executive director of VNOC has done is eliminate anyone at VNOC that had any institutional knowledge, and hired civilians who have no knowledge of working with homelessness.

This is an agency that under John Ratka was 98% run by veterans. Today, in less than a year under Ed Mitchell's 'leadership', it is now an agency staffed by less than 50% of veterans.

The CFO Mitchell hired to oversee the financial aspect of the agency was brought on board, supposedly, because of the lack of financial controls within the agency. At least that's Mitchell's story. But, I knew John Ratka. He built VNOC from the ground up, with plenty of financial controls in place.

The Valley Patriot has found out that the new CFO only has an associate degree from Southern New Hampshire, no management experience, and has hired 2 more money people with enormous salaries. Yet, they still can't get it straight.

Some salaries have doubled if not more.

Speaking to various employees who want to remain nameless for fear of retaliation from the new 'leadership' say that they've been passed over for positions in favor of people who have little or no experience because they speak their mind about the current status of VNOC and see it continuing to spiral under Ed Mitchell.

Who is looking over this tragedy?

NOBODY!

There is a Board of Directors, but get this, the president of this non-profit board is also a member of a for-profit board and has stated that VNOC can and should be a money maker!

I remember reading a news story a few



Former North Andover VSO Ed Mitchell is now in Charge of Veterans Northeast Outreach

years back about a nation-wide non-profit agency that assisted veterans who gave outrageous salaries. When it became public, they were so embarrassed that they simply disappeared. I don't want that to happen to VNOC but it seems like they are following the same path.

MOVING ON WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The Valley Patriot has discovered that even Julian Jaramillo who was THE pillar in the housing dept. has since moved on after the arrival of Ed Mitchell.

These three veteran heroes (Carter, Gilbert and Jaramillo) were the hand-picked pillars of VNOC under John Ratka. They were destined to continue John's legacy at VNOC after he passed. Instead, they are no longer at VNOC while Mitchell hires non-veterans, houses non-veterans, and guts any memory of John Ratka.

If you ask me, as an outsider who worked intimately with John Ratka, Jason Gilbert, and Randy Carter to get homeless veterans off the streets, VNOC is now in a state of emergency!

I am hoping the right people will start to take a closer look, but my fear is that it is far too late.

We hear that Jason Gilbert is now working with an amazing agency out of Devens Massachusetts called Clear Path for Veterans New England where he continues fighting the fight to assist homeless veterans and continues to be there when a local veteran is in need.

As for Randy Carter, he is everywhere assisting homeless veterans whether he is getting paid for it or not. Randy has joined up with two veteran agencies and is assisting them by passing on the knowledge that both Jason Gilbert and John Ratka instilled in him. He is currently trying to finish his Master's Degree.

As for Julian, from what I've been told, is working with the Veterans Administration, continuing to serve veterans in need.

These three men, along with other members of the VNOC team that have left the agency over the past year, will continue to do amazing things for our veterans, I am sure of it.

God bless all three of you and may John Ratka rest in peace knowing that his legacy and vision is intact and will continue to live on in Jason, Julian and Randy, just not at the agency John spent his entire life to build. ♦

This ad donated by Kathleen LaPlante, Author of "Surviving My Father's Suicide"

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HERO: FROM PAGE 1

War.

First serving as a navigator on US Air Force Transport planes, his den has great photos of the aircraft he served on. These pictures capture the spirit of the C-119, the "Flying Boxcar", the C-130 "Hercules", and the KC-135 "Stratotanker" in aerial flight.

Later in his career, he switched gears, and changed from a navigator to an Air Force engineer. This brought him to Southeast Asia, serving in Thailand and Vietnam, and in the skies over Laos and Cambodia. He started to tear up, while talking of the nearly five hundred unaccounted for US Servicemen, who are still missing in action in Laos. Only nine of those shot down over Laos, were returned to the United States after the war. Nearly all the American forces missing in action in Laos are air crewmen. Only a handful were ground troops, and those were all Special Operations soldiers. Laos returned none after the war, and the few that made it back home were all men captured by the North Vietnamese Army in Laos.

Major Santagati's brush with death, did not occur in Southeast Asia. It occurred during a flight out of Charleston, South Carolina stateside. On a C-119 mission, he was slated for an aircraft tail numbered 165, but at the last minute, he was switched to a C-119 tail number 164. The C-119 with the tail number of 165 crashed shortly after departing the airstrip with no survivors. His best friend was navigating this plane, and Major Santagati later escorted his friend's body home. Having interviewed these heroes in our midst, for over two years for the Valley Patriot, this incident reminded me of a similar story told to me by a World War II submariner. That man, due to an illness, was switched to a different boat (what Navy men call their submarines). His second boat (and him) survived the war, his original boat is still missing in action, the fate of the crew is unknown to this day.

Major Santagati then talked about his two brothers, Chuck, who played the piano professionally and was the leader of "The Sandsmen" performing in the Merrimack Valley, Greater Boston and Salisbury Beach and also worked as a schoolteacher. Richard, who later became President of Merrimack College, and his sister Nina MacDonald, now retired from the insurance industry. Major Santagati and his wife Joan had a son, Kevin and they have a daughter Kimberly. During the interview, I had the pleasure of meeting his daughter and her husband John, who served in the Army and the Navy. Ronald and Joan have seven grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, and a lovable, nearly blind dog, named "Buddy".

After leaving the military service, in his



second career, he worked in contracts for companies such as Raytheon. But it was a memento from his last career, I spotted hanging on the wall of his den that moved me the most. After completing his third career as a teacher at Pelham High School, he was presented a picture, now on his wall, signed by the entire Senior class of his last year teaching, with each student sharing a memory of his service as a teacher.

More than once, he praised all the work and services the Veteran's Administration has provided him, well earned, considering what he has done for all of us. One of the younger members of the Greatest Generation, his age group is often called, the Silent Generation, but I think his last service to our nation, at Pelham High, speaks very loudly to us all.

The Dracut American Legion ask all World War II and Korean War Veterans to call 603-518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC!

Please join me at the Dracut American Legion on Saturday February 15th at 7pm for a Salute to US Marines Phil and Don Everly with a free concert by the Everly Brothers, playing the music of the Everly Brothers.



John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 22 years. If you know a World War II veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@yahoo.com. ♦

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‘Servant’

Bill Cushing

VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

Apple TV's fascinating new series 'Servant' is an unsettling psychological thriller from Executive Producer M. Night Shyamalan, the director of 'The Sixth Sense,' 'Signs,' and 'Unbreakable.'

The series stars Lauren Ambrose (Six Feet Under) and Toby Kebbell (Black Mirror) as Dorothy and Sean Turner. They are still in mourning and recovering from the loss of their son Jericho, who died several months earlier. The events surrounding his death are revealed in more detail as the series progresses.

Dorothy took the infant's demise so hard that she was in a catatonic state for a time. That is until she is given a Reborn Doll as part of her Transitory Object Therapy. A Reborn Doll is a dedicatedly detailed baby doll that looks very much like the real thing. Believing it's her son, Dorothy treats the doll like a live baby, changing its diapers, singing it lullabies, and calling it Jericho. Sean goes along with it, as does her brother Julian played by Rupert Grint (Harry Potter), afraid that if they don't it will send Dorothy spiraling psychologically out of control again.

But things get more complicated when Dorothy insists, they bring a live-in nanny into their home. Enter the mysterious Leanne Grayson played by Nell Tiger Free (Game of Thrones). Leanne seems to instantly bond with Dorothy, but she makes Sean and Julian very suspicious and uneasy.

When Sean is alone with Leanne, he tells her that she doesn't have to pretend to care for the doll when Dorothy isn't there, telling her she can drop the act of caring for the doll as if it were real. She doesn't. Sean also begins to experience strange things himself. He's a chef and cooks a lot at home testing recipes. Soon after Leanne arrives, Sean finds a sliver of wood in his food. Shortly after that, he loses his sense of taste, which makes it tough to do his job. He suspects Leanne is involved but can't be sure. Then at the end of the first episode, in a type of twist that Shyamalan is famous for, things take a very strange turn.

The cast in 'Servant' is quite good. Ambrose and Kebbell are excellent. Ambrose plays a very different role than we saw in Six Feet Under, giving Dorothy an almost uncomfortable edge as she tries to balance her TV anchor job with motherhood, all while her trauma is trying to bubble back up. Kebbell plays Sean just right, showing compassion for his wife and allowing her to have the nanny, while still being highly suspicious of Leanne and her motives. Grint is very good as Julian, adding some comic relief at times. This should be the role that breaks him free from Ron Weasley, the character he played in 6 Harry Potter films. But the real breakout performance in 'Servant' comes from Nell Tiger Free who brings such a mystery to Leanne. Seeming to be so gentle and naïve one minute, and then showing that she has a much darker side in the next.

The show's mysterious feel also comes from how it is filmed. The action almost never leaves the Turner's brownstone, which seems so dark, emotionless, and cold that you almost feel like you need a sweater when you are watching. The apartment almost feels like a character in itself, adding to the tension in many of the scenes.

Each of the 10 episodes of 'Servant' runs between 28-32-minutes. This was a great decision. I feel like the narrative would have started to deteriorate if the episodes were stretched to 45-60 minutes.

As creepy and unsettling as 'Servant' can be, it's also a fun watch. I don't want to give away too much, but the finale opens up a whole new direction for season 2, and yes it has already been renewed for a second season.

'Servant' is available to stream on Apple TV+.



If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column. Follow me on Twitter @Billstvtalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ♦



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Peter Larocque
RELIGION COLUMNIST

Can you imagine going to church next Sunday and during prayer time the building begins to shake? We read about this incident in Acts 4:31, "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

The back story to this was that this happened after a very publicized miracle of a man healed who was born lame from his mother's womb and many saw it and therefore couldn't deny it.

The healing took place at the Temple, Gate Beautiful, and you can read all about what happened to him in Acts Chapter 3. The Apostles Peter and John had the privilege of ministering to him and many people knew him before his healing took place and came to see him at the neighborhood hangout, Solomon's porch, called greatly wondering.

After the miracle many people started looking towards Peter and John as if they were special, but Peter put a stop to that right away! Acts 3:11-15, "And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.¹² And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate,

when he was determined to let him go.¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; ¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."

Shortly after this, the chief priest showed up and were not happy that Peter and John were preaching Jesus. So, they had Peter and John arrested to appear before the rulers who were not happy either that Jesus had been taught.

Acts 4:6-10, "And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,⁹ If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole."¹¹ Acts 4:13-14, "13 Now when they saw the boldness of

Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.¹⁴ And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it."

I just love that! "they could not say anything against it," very powerful. The boldness of Peter and John is amazing! At any time, these rulers could just give the order and their heads are off! Just some 50 days earlier these same men were locked behind closed doors for fear of these rulers.

Now, after the Resurrection of Jesus and the Day of Pentecost having taken place, these same men are full of boldness and are fearless. What changed them? Only one thing, The Power of the Holy Spirit! Here they stood before the rulers unafraid!

Next the rulers discussed among themselves what should they do with Peter and John.

Acts 4:18-21, "18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.²¹ So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done."

This brings us to Acts 4:23-24, 31, "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.²⁴ And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:..." 31 "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

What changes people from being full of fear and locked up behind closed doors to speaking God's word with boldness? Only one thing, being filled with The Holy Spirit! And according to the Bible, fear isn't from God! The Bible says in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

That my friends, is powerful! Being filled with the Holy Spirit helps defeat fear in our lives giving us boldness to manifest power, love and soundness of mind!

Do you find yourself full of fear? If so, ask the Holy Spirit to fill you! You have nothing to lose but fear and gain power, love and sound mind!

Now it is not promised that when we pray at our places of worship, that they will shake, but on the other hand, why not? God did it then and He could do it again!

God Bless, Peter Larocque
peterlarocque@hotmail.com

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BENEATH THE SURFACE

Hypocrisy, Insanity, and the Devil's Playbook

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT MORALITY COLUMNIST

It is bewildering how much comfort there is with inconsistency and contradiction today. We live in an era when logical consistency no longer matters. Truth and justice have taken a back seat to the attempt to fit everything into a man-made ideological narrative.

This is particularly evident in the many who preach tolerance and 'civil liberties'; and yet themselves are the most intolerant among us. Those who preach acceptance demand that everyone's point of view conform to their ideology. Those who criticize this president for his course language are the same people who have been tearing him to shreds with calumny and slander every day of the news cycle since he's been elected.

Such hypocrisy is easy to see across central themes of the day. Those who support feminism kowtow to transgender ideology that allows biological men to compete in women's sports, creating an unfair advantage. Those who fight for the disadvantaged have no problem killing them before birth. And those who champion the poor are the elites of the Democratic Party who use them to maintain their power.

There's more. Those obsessed with protecting children from abuse are often those who allow drag queens into elementary schools, allow homosexual "couples" to adopt them, and fight for hormone treatments on gender-confused children. All of this is child abuse, molded tightly into an ideological narrative.

We live in a society that condemns suicide but pushes euthanasia; fights drugs but over-medicates people; frowns on illicit sex but condones pornography; loves education but hates truth, and pampers children but kills over a third of them before birth. It's no wonder that so many young people are confused and depressed.

Never has this level of hypocrisy and insanity been so widely permeated. As rule of thumb, when there is such irrationality and hatred it is not unreasonable to postulate a movement of demonic activity and influence. Such activity can be outlined in the following from "The Devil's Playbook for Contemporary Times: Hell's 7-step plan to weaken the Church and attack the world."

1) Inspire the creation of the birth control pill, knowing it will cause a sexual revolution and culture of death, gravely violating human nature and God's law.

2) Inspire the media and academia — the two culture molding establishments

of our times — to persuade the masses to seek "freedom" from God by molding their minds to accept the lies of their ideology, in other words, to create a Secular Progressive movement.

3) De-fang the Church by infiltrating the clergy with men suffering from SSAD (same-sex attraction disorder), knowing that a SSAD priesthood will remain silent on sexual morality. Watch as the sexual revolution evolves into a culture of death and destroys the souls of countless sheep abandoned by their shepherds.

4) Listen with delight to the deafening silence from Church pulpits as the pill lays the groundwork for a fornication culture that inevitably demands an abortion culture. This will lead to a divorce culture and breakdown of the family.

5) As the family breaks down, make sure to use the natural self-loathing that comes from sexual sin to harden hearts and blind minds to the fundamental truths of human nature. Inspire politicians to have government take up the slack left by dysfunctional families — creating a socialist society.

6) As thousands of preborn children are slaughtered each day due to the demonic premarital sex culture created by the pill, and as suicide rates ascend to new heights, begin to emasculate men to fear feminists. Cheer wildly as countless souls, marriages, and families die due to the void in moral leadership left by clergy and fathers by their scandalous silence and lack of courage.

7) Watch gleefully as the western world commits societal suicide, imploding from within for lack of faith and a depopulation crisis that necessitates hordes of immigrants as a temporary fix, legal and illegal. Delight in the death — spiritual, physical, and cultural — due largely to all the fallout from the contraception revolution begun in the 1960s and 70s.

Post-script: Continue the relentless attack, and hope the Church does not become purified and strengthened once again. If Catholics were Catholic, we would have no chance. The Church has always been the only obstacle standing in our way, keeping our plans from succeeding.

Paul Murano is talk host of 'Beneath the Surface' radio and video podcasts, teaches college philosophy and theology, and is a staff writer/producer. Check out Paul's website at PaulMurano.com. Email him at PJDM@aol.com.



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Sue Piazza's Book Corner

“The TB12 Method: How to Achieve a Lifetime of Sustained Peak Performance”

by Tom Brady

Published by Simon and Schuster

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Hardcover \$19.49 on Amazon, Free for Prime Users (No Look Inside feature available) also available in Audible Audiobook, Kindle, and Audio CD

Pages: 296. Encompasses' an Intro, Index, Testimonials, FAQ's, Acknowledgements and an About The Author section

5 Bookmarks out of 5

This book hit #1 on the New York Times Bestseller. This is no surprise to anyone who has read the book. It is jam packed with information and not just about Tom Brady's career.

The book starts off with a glimpse into Tom's life, how he came from a sports family, and how he played several sports. As a youth, feeling other athletes were better than him he learned his weaknesses and worked on them. While in high school he attended football camp and began his focus on football which he continued to concentrate on while at college in Michigan.

After college he was the 6th round draft pick, 199th overall. Scouts were informed that he didn't have the body for football, lacked a really strong arm, etc. Not a glowing report for someone looking to sign him to a team. Tom has had an incredible life journey, going from that to becoming "The GOAT," The Greatest of All Time.

It is said about NFL longevity that "... the average NFL career today is 3.3 years, with most of those careers cut short by injury." (pg. 48) Number 12 must be doing something right; he's currently in his twentieth season with the Patriots!

The focus of this book is on pliability, something missing from traditional training, and how to keep one's body in tip top shape in order to benefit from pliable

muscles.

Overall health guidelines are given. Sections of the book are highlighted in a greyish background, other parts use red lettering, important segments that one should not skip.

He gives information about science and medicine. The body's muscles are shown. We are given photos and explanations of his training coach working on him, then we are given photos and explanations of how to self-administer the program.

He makes sure the reader understands that everyone is different, so everyone's needs are different.

There is a segment on nutrition. In general, foods that are acidic cause inflammation, and alkaline-forming foods reduce inflammation. There is a list of "Strongly Alkalizing Foods" and "Strongly Acidifying Foods." There is a section on "Combining Foods" an example of a "no-no" is meat and potatoes, a staple for many.

Exercises, recipes, (I am looking forward to trying some) nutrition, hydration, and more are detailed. He even goes into how to read a food label. Grocery lists are given, his average daily workout and diet are provided as well as foods to limit or avoid. He even includes information on his "brain fitness regimen." He worked with scientists behind Brain HQ to develop his regimen. He uses games designed to get the player to focus and not to be distracted by outside events, something particularly important for a quarterback, when people are running from all parts of the field towards his outstretched arm (and ball). The role of sleep and bioenergetic apparel and sleepwear to help the body heal faster are also discussed.

I could not think of one thing missing from this book. I have read many books, I've been doing this column for several

BOOKS: PAGE 27

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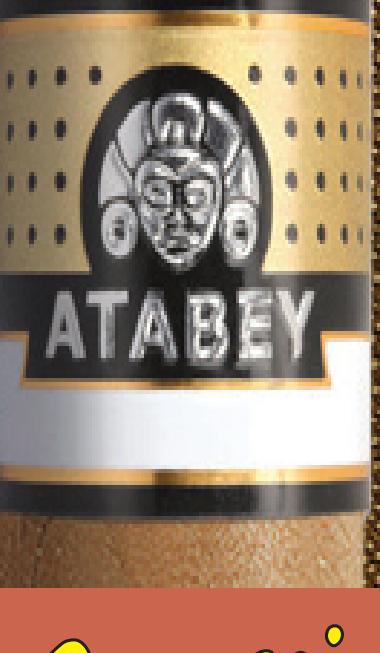
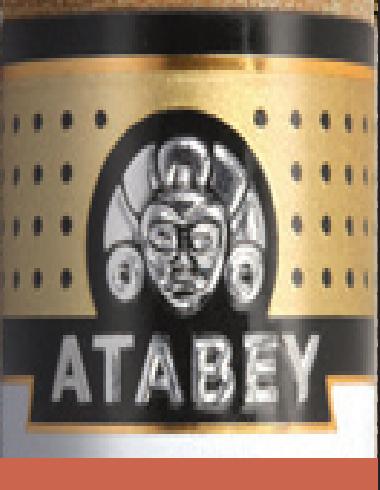
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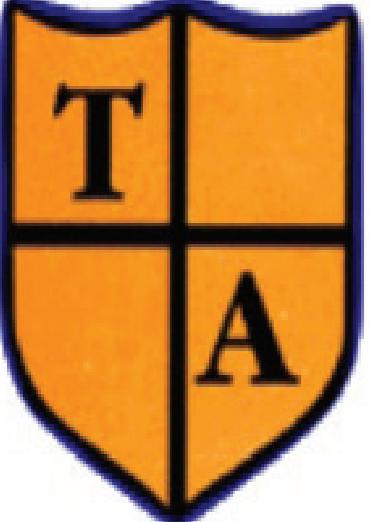


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Bunn, \$325,000, 6 Windsor St
 Joseph Rgaudet & Christina L Cristaldi, Arelis Torres & Miguel Torres, \$307,900, 13 Albion St
 Daniel S Miller, Robert W & Patricia H Freccero, \$249,900, 2 Peever St

NORTH ANDOVER

Lauren Parillo, Brenden Lydon & Madeline Blair Lydon, \$449,900, 3 Elm St Unit 2
 Michael W & Jill P Howard, Kelcie D & Evan P Carpinito, \$765,000, 91 Johnny Cake St
 Mark M & Simone C Kokavec, Daniel R Hudder & Stacey A Greenberg, \$900,000, 115 Campion Rd
 Patrick O'Sullivan, Johnathan & Shannon Moody, \$830,000, 40 Pheasant Brook Rd
 Paul F & Shelly A Kochanski, Michael & Julie Pabian, \$755,000, 79 Rocky Brook Rd
 James J & Rosemarie A Connolly Trs & Connolly Family Revocable Trust, Alexander M & Suzanna R Perry, \$767,500, 210 Bear Hill Rd
 William & Irene Fung, Kameron Sanchez & Laura Gomez Machiavelo, \$664,900, 58 Mayflower Dr Unit 8

Cecelia E Sangermano Irrevocable Trust & Diane Marie Carney Tr, Brandon Wright & Christine Machtemes, \$450,000, 268 Dale St
 Emily T King, Marcia T Fabiano, \$534,500, 23 Ciderpress Wy Unit TH4-1
 Samuel S Brooks & Robert Mascali, Tilotoma Mukherjee & Mandira Mukherjee & Vivekananda Mukhopadhyay, \$1,120,000, 410 Bear Hill Rd
 Carmen & Angelina Finocchiaro & Anne M Messina, 15-17 Furber Avenue LLC, \$500,000, 15-17 Furber Ave
 North Andover Realty Corp, Village Realty Trust & Paul J St Hilaire Tr, \$375,000, 15 Regency Pl
 Paul C & Jessica M Carroll, Daniel J Kelly, \$185,000, 85 Farrwood Ave Unit 1
 Robert A & Jennifer L Pacheco, Naomi E Ricci, \$455,000, 56 Autran Ave
 Kate Machowski, Archana & Balaraju Miryala, \$399,000, 124 Cotuit St
 Eitan Y & Michelle D Goldberg, Frederick Scibelli Jr & Jaime Scibelli, \$399,000, 57 Glenwood St
 Nathaniel M Sims, Fabien G & Theresa M LaPointe, \$85,000, 280 Holt Rd Unit 3

Richard A & Linda T Laviska, Richard Charles Laviska, \$450,000, 1472 Salem St
 Karin Heller, Ellen M Zaglakas Tr & Ellen M Zaglakas Living Trust, \$310,000, 190 Chickering Rd Unit 210D
 Thomas J & Lyndia S Lamson Trs & Lamson Realty Trust, Christine & Michael Gerard Quinn, \$677,000, 92 Heath Rd
 AAGO Realty Trust & Christopher A Moen III Tr, Kevin M & Emily M Smith, \$235,000, 867 Turnpike St Units 214,216
 Micahel J & Catherine T Medeiros/Catherine T Porter, John W Creahan III & Kara Creahan, \$690,000, 57 Candlestick Rd
 NAOP LLC, NAOP Medical Realty LLC, \$1,750,000, 203 Turnpike St Unit 300C,451 Andover St Unit G11 Etc

My 2 Girls Realty LLC, Cipriano C Cardona & Griselda C Robles & Anasofia Cardona, \$625,000, 35-37 Massachusetts Ave
 Darlene M McAlloon/Darlene Ellis & Thomas Ellis, Giovanni Honorato Dasilva, \$625,000, 40 Summit St
 Kathleen E Murphy Tr & Murphy Family Irrevocable Trust, Joseph A Pane, \$582,500, 33 Wentworth Ave
 Gentle Home Care Services Inc, Kept Properties LLC, \$465,000, 140 Willow St Unit 3



Migdalia Morina and Roy Cahoon of Tewksbury were married at Body and Brain Yoga Studio by Tewksbury Town Clerk, Denise Graffeo.

A Special Wedding at Body and Brain Yoga

Migdalia Morina joined Riverwalk BodynBrain Yoga in Jan. 2019 after having thyroid surgery. Her physician recommended she try yoga to help relax. Through class and home practice she has learned to relax and her sleep has improved.

Migdalia's family lives in Puerto Rico and when she traveled there earlier this year she brought several copies of "I've Decided to Live 120 Years" book in Spanish to distribute to her family and friends.

She is also interested in creating a Spanish Youtube short class in Spanish which we will work on in the future.

Migdalia told The Valley Patriot that she loved it right away and soon brought her then boyfriend, Roy Cahoon, to a class at Body and Brain Yoga at Salvatore's Riverwalk.

Roy decided to join after his first class. He works as an instructor as a truck driver and says it helps him to relax and manage stress better. The couple resides in Tewksbury.

Last month, before their wedding they asked Body and Brain Yoga if they could

be married at the yoga studio.

Before the actual ceremony they took a noon class. Roy's mom, sister and brother joined the class also. They then changed into their wedding clothes and were married in the training room by Tewksbury Town Clerk, Denise Graffeo.

Following the ceremony they enjoyed a champagne toast and then enjoyed dinner together at Salvatore's Restaurant.

The couple will travel to Puerto Rico in the spring to have a wedding celebration with Migdalia's family.

As the Valley Patriot was leaving, we were given a copy of the "120" book.

Every evening the couple do toe tapping together at bed time, taking turns counting. This greatly helps them with sleep.

They plan on joining Body and Brain this March at the Brain Education Festival, being held at the Honor's Haven Resort in Ellenville, NY.

The Body and Brain Yoga studio has been in the Riverwalk complex in Lawrence for 4 yrs. It is a franchise with 100 studios across the United States.

BOOKS: FROM PAGE 25

years, I have never had so many highlighted areas and notes as I have in this book. There are probably more than in all the books I've read combined. A testament to the importance of his message.

The only issue I had with this book was that in the beginning there was a lot of repetition. I chalked it up to the old adage "three times for the normal mind." There was at least one sentence that was copied, verbatim, only a few pages later.

This book is very comprehensive. Despite some restating, I was very impressed with this book. I would recommend it for

anyone interested in maintaining their health, especially for athletes that need targeted help. A really worthwhile training manual for life, and health.

Highly recommended.

Susan Piazza is an author, columnist, and blogger. She can be found at susan-piazzaauthor.com Her newly released book "A Bird Call That Isn't" can be found on Amazon at: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0829MHLRX> You can follow her progress on: Facebook: "A Bird Call That Isn't launch" for more info. ♦

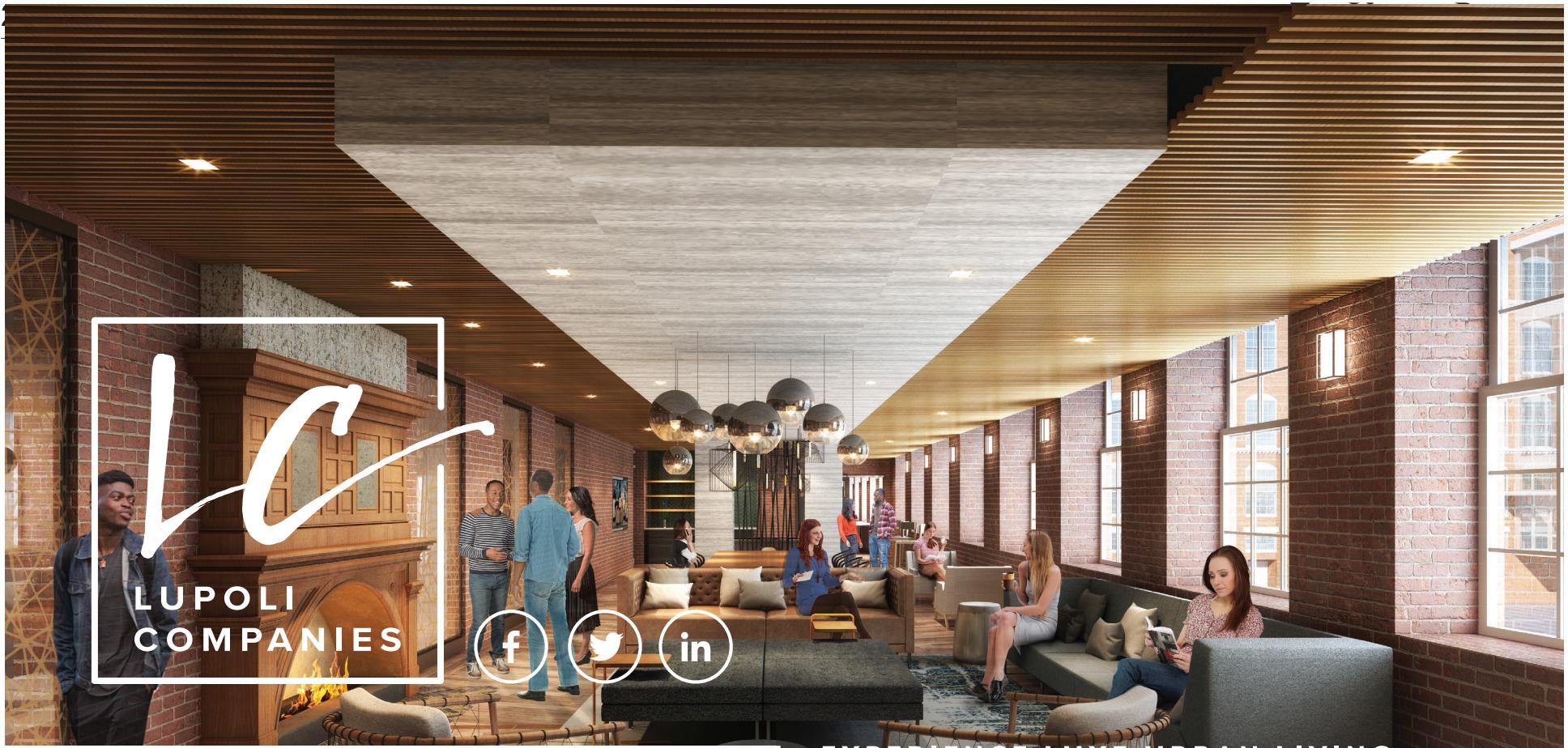


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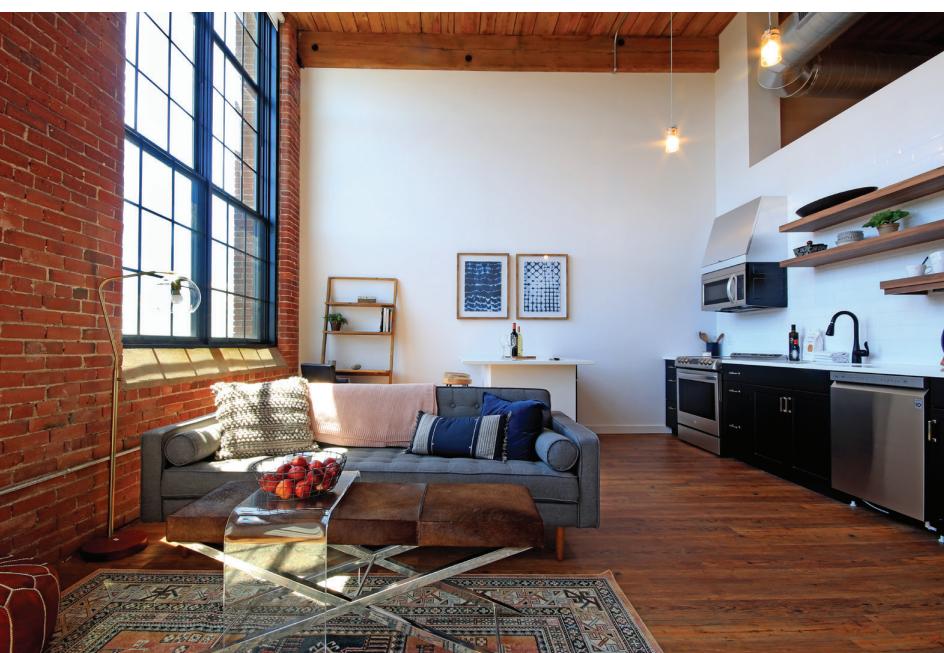
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